Maria Bâtcă

The Romanian Folk Costume

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« The Folk Art Album »

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THE ROMANIAN FOLK COSTUME

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The Romanian folk costume as an identity mark

On the background of Romania's integration in the community of the European countries, the systematic exploration of the whole patrimony of the Romanian ethnic group constitutes a first rank objective of the scientific research at the beginning of the third millennium. By investigating the primary sources and the historical roots, scholars have pointed out the traditional values and the characteristic elements of Romanian culture and civilisation, underlining the major contribution of Romanians to the enriching of the cultural heritage of mankind.

By preserving the inestimable archetypal values of the old civilisations in the space bordered by the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea and by enriching them through a permanent capacity of assimilating and creatively processing the elements coming from other cultural areas, the Romanians have shaped out one of the most harmonious and vigorous cultural synthesis on the European continent.

The following study approaches the folk costume out of all the components of the Romanian culture and civilisation. Besides language, customs and traditions, the folk costume makes an emblem, a symbol, a point of reference, a fundamental identity constant that certifies the inclusion of its bearers into a certain cultural space that identifies and defines them spiritually.

People in the traditional communities wear folk costumes at all the events of their life, either casual or festive and ceremonial, since childhood until old age. Thus, the folk costume is a material assembly with practical functions but also a cultural creation, imprinted with symbols and a pertinent communication means within the frame of the traditional rural community and, at the same time, an expressive visual language with multiple semantic valences.

In the settling of the fundamental coordinates of the national specificity, the folk costume plays a distinctly important part as it synthesizes the existential and spiritual dimension of the ethnics that created it.

More than any other cultural phenomenon, the folk costume reflects social structures, mentalities, beliefs, traditions and customs that differ from one ethnic group to another.

Although the need for clothing is as universal and imperiously necessary as the need for food and shelter, the folk costume has known particular forms in different civilisations and different historical periods, being shaped differently in different cultures. That is how we can explain the richness and diversity of the types of costume with their morphological, decorative and chromatic variants, leading to the idea of clothing systems that include specific clothing options and rules for each ethnic group.

The folk costumes resonate with the geographical environment, with clime, the rhythm of seasons, age, occupations, social and material status of the people who wear them. Adapted to daily wearing or festive occasions, any folk costume expresses metamorphoses of age and mentality and being an identity mark, it is at the same time a form of manifestation of both the local and the universal space.

Beyond the techniques of weaving, tailoring, sewing and adorning the folk costume, there are always the feelings, experiences, human attitudes and patterns of behaviour, reflecting social, moral, and aesthetic values.

In one of his writings entitled *Sartor Resartus* (*The Tailor Retailored*), Thomas Carlyle, the British encyclopaedic writer of the Victorian age, speaks suggestively of *a philosophy of the clothes*. He claims, basically, that clothes include all that people think of, dream of, do, and are; the whole universe outside their own persons and all it represents is nothing more than clothes.[1]

Constituting a major dimension of human experience, the attire is bound to be analysed in terms of the historic, social, economic and cultural relations that it reflects. The numberless possibilities of the human communities to answer to a whole complex of factors that determined their evolution have crystallized in cultural "models" specific to each ethnic group.

Of the multiple factors that have contributed to the moulding of the system of values observed in the traditional village, a special role is due to be attributed to the geographical position of the Romanian space in the centre of Europe, at an equal distance between the western shore of Ireland and the peaks of the Ural Mountains and also midway between the North Pole and the Equator, at the latitude of 45 degrees. Such a position has favoured the development of agriculture and cattle breeding ever since the dawn of history.

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[1] Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, the thinker's first major work, was published in 1833-34 in *Fraser's Magazine*.

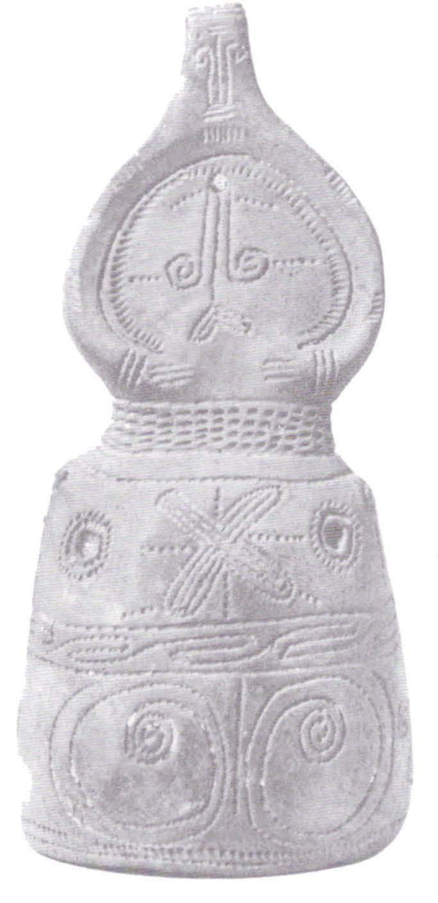
In times of trouble, our ethnic being was protected by the Carpathian ring, surrounded by the crown of the woods and by the abundance of rivers and lakes. As the Danube has opened navigation towards the West and the Black Sea eased our way to the Near East and to the Mediterranean shores, the Romanian land has been constantly in contact with different patterns of civilisation.

But how deep can we probe the overlapping levels of the old civilisations in order to discover the genesis of the forms of the folk culture and of the peasant costume of today?

The highly vital vein of the Romanian folk art is strongly rooted in the Neolithic culture and draws its sap out of the civilisation of the Thracians, the Illirs and the Dacians, being also influenced by successive influences of the Celtic, Greek-Roman and later Byzantine cultures, followed by imprints from the cultural areas of the Eastern Mediterranean area, of the Indian and Persian Orient, of the spaces north of the Black Sea and of the Western – especially Germanic – world.

The archaeological diggings allow us to cast a look back to the fruit-pickers and hunters in the Carpathian Balkan space of nine millennia ago, who settled on the fertile plain of the lower course of the Danube in order to make their living out of primitive plant cultivation and cattle breeding.

"Romania – as wrote the paleolinguist and -anthropologist Marija Gimbutas (an American researcher of Lithuanian origin), in the preface to the Romanian edition of her book *Civilisation and Culture* – is actually the hearth of what we call The Old Europe, a cultural entity lasting from 6500 to 3500 BC, that was organized in a matriarchal society, theocratic, peaceful, loving and creating art. This entity preceded the Indo-Europeanized patriarchal societies of warriors that sprung out in the Bronze and Iron ages".[2]



Neolithic figurine from Cârna

Archaeologists discovered the tablets of Tărtăria (Alba district) in 1961 among the relics of this ancient world without fortifications and war weapons, but with temples devoted to the Great Goddess, impersonation of the Mother Earth in various hypostases. The tablets are covered with a sacred writing certain experts consider to be the oldest in the world (6th millennium BC).

Hundreds of miniature vases dug out in the central and eastern zones of the Balkans and belonging to the early period of the Vinča culture contain inscriptions that certify the existence of the "old European writing" roughly 2000 years before the Sumerian writing.[3]

Other precious material elements are the models of temples, sanctuaries and dwellings within which ceramic figures have been found, representing persons in the exercise of their daily actions like baking bread, moulding clay vases and weaving cloth.

Craftsmen worked with copper at the half of the 6th millennium BC and goldsmiths crafted ornaments and pieces of cult out of the precious metal 4000 years BC.

Headdresses, ritual masks as well as some costume details can be distinguished on the Neolithic figures belonging to the cultures Vintcha-Turdaş, Vădastra, Gumelniţa and Cucuteni, but also on pieces of the Bronze Age, discovered at Cârna and Gârla Mare.[4]

Archaeologists and historians of the Romanian folk costumes consider the ornaments incised on the statues as possible reproductions of the clothing ornamentation of those distant times because they detect striking resemblances between the elements of costume represented on the prehistoric figurines and the component pieces of the nowadays folk costume.[5]

Along fifteen hundred years of peace the first peasants of Central Europe were able to develop an agrarian civilisation that attained a high degree of complexity and refinement in the 5th millennium BC.

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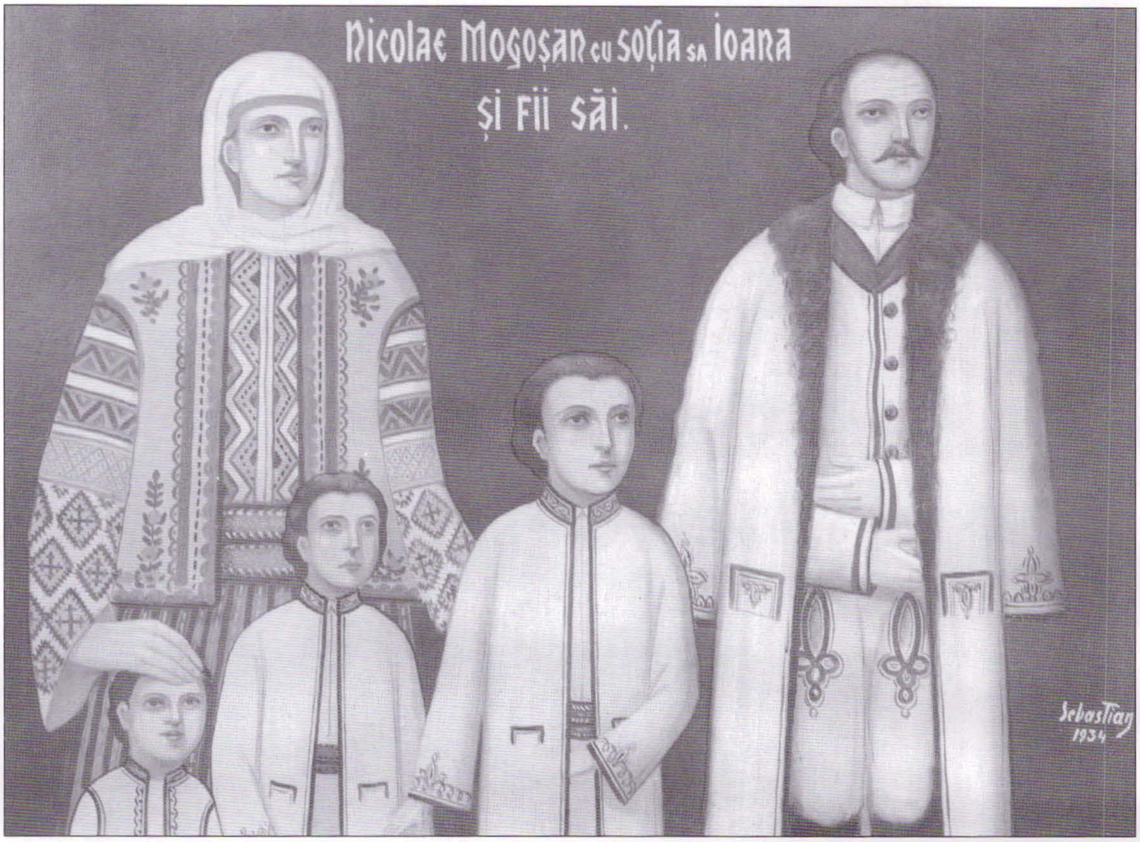
[2] Marija Gimbutas, *Civilizaţie şi cultură* (*Civilisation and Culture*), p. 49.

[3] *Ibidem*, pp. 65-68.

[4] Al.Tzigara-Samurcaş, *L'art du peuple roumain*, p. 30; Vladimir Dumitrescu, *Les statuettes de l'âge du bronze découvertes dans la nécropole de Cârna*, p. 23.

[5] Vladimir Dumitrescu, *Necropola de incineraţie din epoca bronzului de la Cârna* (*The Bronze Age Incineration Necropolis of Cârna*), p. 263.


Nicolae Mogoșan cu soția sa Ioana
și fii săi.
Sebastian
1934

Votive painting representing peasant founders (gentry) in a church of the Olt district

By examining the widely different categories of sources that document the past civilisation of the Romanian people, starting from the art monuments (some of which date back to the Antiquity and others, to the times of the Romanian principalities and *voievodate*), continuing with stamps, paintings, costume albums (that reveal the people's faces and the particular features of their clothes in suggestive images) and with wills, dowry acts and the accounts of the foreign travellers who crossed the Romanian land in ages of great trouble for the history and the destiny of our ethnic group, we have the possibility to add to the image created by other categories of sources and supplement it with the information contained in other documents, so as to be able to create an overall view upon the Romanian traditional civilisation.

Significant material documents for our research date back to the 14th century, the earliest images found, in the *Chronicon Pictum Vindobonense* of 1358 representing Romanian peasants in folk costumes (wearing white cloth shirts and tight trousers (*cioareci*), peasant sandals (*opinci*) and fluffy woollen mantles with long sleeves hanging down their back (*sarici*), a type of overcoats that the shepherds in the south of Transylvania still wear regularly. These images show the persistence of some ancient costume elements that correspond to a mentality and a behaviour code specific to that early age.

The Treaty on Military Art and War Machines, also known as the *Codex Latinus Parisinus* and written by Paulus Sanctinus Ducensis at the end of the 14th century is amply illustrated with images of knights and pedestrians wearing shining armours and a series of army auxiliaries: craftsmen, carters, fishermen, but also peasants wearing the folk costumes of their time.[9]

Iconography is another important source for investigating the evolution of the folk costume. The portraits of the church founders provide precious data regarding the clothing characteristic for some social categories, the materials used to make the costume pieces and the elements of cut, ornamentation and chromatics.

The founders belonging to the classes of local officials, tradesmen, craftsmen and peasants increase in

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[9] Ion Dumitriu-Snagov, *Țările Române în secolul al XIV-lea. Codex Latinus Parisinus* (*The Romanian Lands in the 14th century. Codex Latinus Parisinus*).

The larger villages evolved gradually into urban settlements with temples, two-levelled buildings with several rooms, furniture, sculptures, decorative and cultic ceramics. By language of the drawings and the graphic and chromatic symbols, the shape and ornamentation of the pieces transmit precious information about the mythical mentality of the past.

In the years 4000-3500 BC, the eastern wind drove upon that peaceful centre of European culture successive waves of riding warriors. These were the Indo-Europeans, worshippers of the sky and the masculine force and together with the natives they were parents of the majority of the peoples that shape the European world of today.

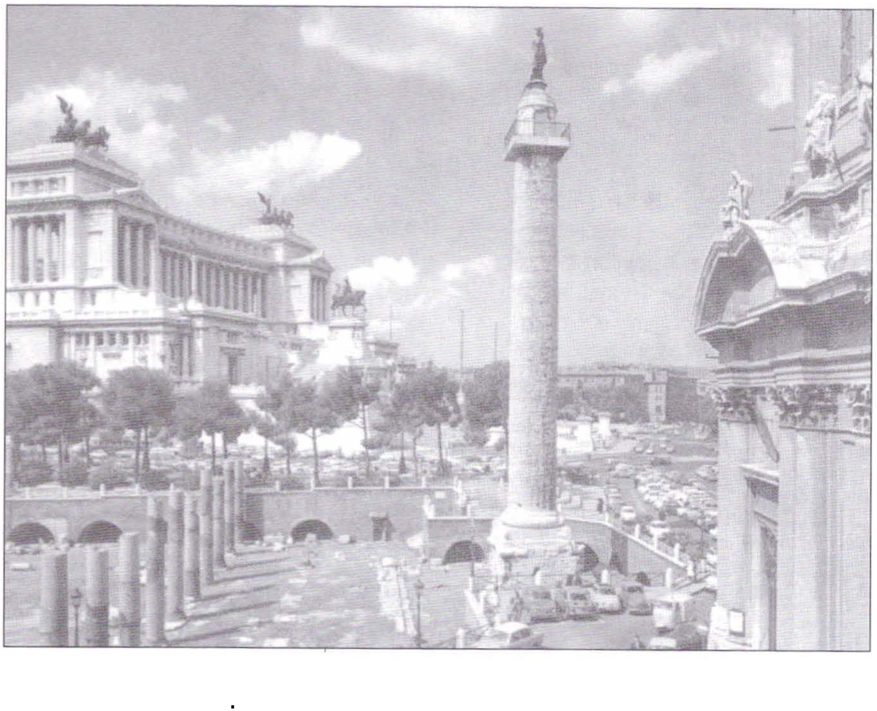
The disintegration of the Old Europe took place gradually after 3500 BC in most parts of the central and eastern territories and of the Balkan Peninsula, excepting the mountainous areas.[6]

Although they were menaced so many times by wars of invasion and destruction, the ancestors of the Romanians, the Dacians, whom the Greek historian Herodotus called "the bravest and the fairest of the Thracians", faced valiantly the numberless invasions and they stood still in their fortress of the Carpathians surrounded by fertile plains.

At the beginning of the second century AD, the Dacian warriors fought manly against the legions of the Roman Empire and they passed away to eternity but their fortresses, arms and costumes were carved in the stone spiral of the Column of Trajanus, standing proof of the origin, continuity, resistance and bravery of our ancestors.

The testimony in the centre of Rome is reinforced by the triumphal monument of Adamclisi, Dobrudja, that marks the beginnings of the existence of the Romanian people, forged out of the union between the Dacians and the Romans.

The two monuments of the classic Antiquity: *Tropaeum Traiani* of Adamclisi, in Dobrudja, and the *Column of Trajanus* in Rome (→) crown the rich archive of documents carved in stone that prove the multi-millenary persistence of some costume pieces that appear even in our days with some evolution. For instance, the cut of the women's dress in the northern parts of Moldavia, the men's shirt with lateral clefts still in use in the folk clothing of the inhabitants of Wallachia until the 19th century, the tight homespun peasant trousers (*cioareci, iţari*), the peasant sandals (*opinci*) as long as the hoods frequently worn all over Romania are the same costume pieces that the Dacians would wear, as they appear in the ancient art creation.



Lasting for centuries, the stone monuments raised during the Roman ruling over Dacia constitute basic documents for the history of the Romanian people and, at the same time, authentic testimonies of the duration and evolution of the Romanian folk costume.

During the Roman occupation and the migrations, the native art continued actually the Dacian art, preserving a series of traditional decorative elements, enriched with new forms taken over from the repertory of the Roman provincial material culture or even from the cultural repertory of the migratory populations.[7]

A series of feminine representations on funeral stones, altars, medallions and aedicule date back to the Roman age and a number of statues from the same epoch are remarkable for the attentive carving of the physiognomic features and especially for the characteristic details of the costumes.

Human representations appear also on metal objects specific for the art in the 4th and 5th centuries. An example of such a creation is the female character on the patera in the treasure of Pietroasa[8], wearing her hair with a middle parting and braided in plaits that crown the head and are twisted at its nape. Such a hairdo resembles that of the Dacian women as they are represented on the monument in Adamclisi.

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[6] Marija Gimbutas. *Civilisation and Culture*. p. 69.

[7] *** *Istoria artelor plastice in România (History of the Plastic Arts in Romania).* . p. 82.

[8] Răzvan Theodorescu. *Un mileniu de artă la Dunărea de Jos (A Millenium of Art in the Space of the Lower Danube)*. pp. 48-52.

number in the 18th century and in the first decades of the 19th century. The votive pictures in fresco technique on the walls of the churches, which were mostly wooden, do not represent any longer rulers or nobles, but people belonging to the lower social classes, like the free peasants, called *moşneni* or *răzeşi*.

This phenomenon gets ampler in the rural environment and small boroughs especially in the regions at the feet of the Carpathians (the Oltenia region, in the counties of Vâlcea, Mehedinţi and most of all Gorj).[10]

The analysis of the founders' portraits points out the fact that the structure of the costume in a certain region is unitary. The differences appear in the ornamentation details, in the amplitude of the decoration and in the quality of the materials used to make the costumes, which vary from one character to another or from one village to another, depending on the social category the founder belongs to.

It is worth mentioning that the painters observed even the particulars of age and civil status of their models, revealing a deep concern with rendering the individuality of each character and of their costumes.

The votive pictures representing the peasant church founders are precious documents, having a historical and artistic value; they provide interesting information on the local folk costume, the component elements of the costume characteristic for one region and one historic period, the artistic taste of the creators of the costumes that express the Romanian specificity by an original aesthetic perspective.

Another extremely important source documenting certain aspects of the social life is the corpus of the diaries kept by the foreign travellers that visited the Romanian Principalities.

Among the foreign travellers who pay attention to the folk costume, let us mention the bishop Antonius Verancius, at the middle of the 16th century, François de Pavie, who visited Moldavia in 1585, the catholic archbishop Bandini, who crossed the Moldavian land during the reign of Vasile Lupu and the Swede Clas Ralamb who reached the Romanian Principality during the reign of Matei Basarab.[11]

The accounts of the above-mentioned travellers describe the winter costume, composed of peasant's fleecy woollen mantles and sheepskin coats and also the traditional footwear of the Romanian peasants – the *opinca*.

In the second half of the 17th century, we find the notes of the Syrian Paul of Alep, who accompanied the patriarch Macarie of Antioch along his journey in a time when the reign of Vasile Lupu was near its end.[12] The German traveller Konrad Jacob Hildebrand visited Transylvania in the same period.[13]

Writing about hair style and headdresses, Paul of Aleppo grasped some social differences, mentioning that the women from Moldavia and Wallachia wore their hair twisted and arranged around the head as a ring with a white cloth support over it while the rich ones wore a rosy support covered by a white thin silk head kerchief (called *marama*).

A stamp from the 1667 work *Origines et occasus Transylvanorum* of Laurentius Toppeltinus represents three Romanian peasants: a man, a housewife and a girl, wearing folk costumes specific to their epoch.

Ancient sewing techniques can be noticed on the women's shirts: *warp on the thread* and *warp on the pleats*, two decorative procedures that belong to the common background of culture of the Romanian folk costume.

The man's shirt in the illustration in Toppeltinus' book has a cut which appears only at the shirts of free men in the Middle Age: little nobles (*nemeşi*) in the Land of Haţeg and the boyars in the Land of Olt. It is pleated around the neck and it has large loose sleeves, being worn over the tight trousers. The man also wears a peasant's fluffy woollen mantle without a collar and evidencing an archaic cut and peasant sandals (*opinci*) with leather strings.[14]

Antonio Maria del Chiaro Fiorentino's book *The Revolutions of Wallachia*, issued in Venice in 1718, was appreciated by the historian Nicolae Iorga as "the most important account of a traveller at the end of the 18th century". The author was a court secretary during the reigns of the Romanian rulers Constantin Brâncoveanu, Şerban Cantacuzino and Nicolae Mavrocordat.[15]

The abundant varied data on the folk costume show that Del Chiaro visited the Romanian villages and got familiarized directly with the ethnographic reality. He noticed that young girls would walk bareheaded, as different from women. They would braid their hair and twist it in a bun fixed with hair pins. Married women would cover their heads with a white silk head kerchief

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[10] Andrei Pănoiu, *Pictura votivă din nordul Olteniei, secolul XIX* (*Votive Painting in Northern Oltenia, 19th century*), p. 6; Georgeta Stoica; Virgil Vasilescu, *Portul popular din Gorj* (*Folk Costume in the Gorj District*), p. 26.

[11] Al. Alexianu, *Mode şi veşminte din trecut* (*Fashions and Garments of the Past*), vol. I, p. 146; Corina Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului de curte în Ţările Româneşti* (*History of the Court Costume in the Romanian Principalities*), p. 108.

[12] *** *Călători străini* (*Foreign Travellers*), vol. VI, pp. 27-28, 33.

[13] *** *Arta populară românească* (*Romanian Folk Art*), p. 8.

[14] Laurentius Toppeltinus, *Origines et occasus Transylvanorum*, Lugduni, p. 110.

[15] Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători* (*Romanian History by Travellers*), p. 311.

(*maramă*), rounded under the chin and tied at the back. Del Chiaro remarked the expensive necklaces of gold or silver coins that the women would wear around their necks as a distinctive mark of the social category they belonged to.

The Austrian topographer Friedrich Schwantz drew an important map of the region Oltenia in 1722. The map contains a few significant illustrations of the costume of the 18th century, observing the differences of social class between the boyars, the peasants and the town people.[16] The female peasant costume appearing on Schwantz's map is formed of blouses with streams of ornaments, striped homespun skirts and waistbands.

Other precious sources for researching the different costumes for different social categories, diverse environments and varied occupations are the costume albums dating back to the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries.

The most important of these albums is entitled *Kostümbilderbuch* and can be found in the University Library of Graz (Austria). A copy of the album is kept at the University Library of Cluj, Romania. The painted codex of Graz contains 99 watercolour paintings, out of which 24 refer to the Romanians in Transylvania and Walachia. The value of this anonymous album is due to the fact that it represents costumes of people belonging to different social classes: nobles, servants of the royal office, tradesmen, peasants and clerics.

Other two folk costume albums of the 18th century are *Kostümbilder aus Siebenbürgen. Tabulae pictae et colorae* (that can be found in the Library of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest and contains 91 paintings) and *Imagines Nationum Ditionis Hungariae coloribus illuminate* (that can be found in the Science Library of the Hungarian Academy in Budapest and includes 36 watercolour paintings. Most paintings (almost 60) are almost identical to those in the Graz album, which was probably a source of inspiration for the later works quoted above.

Another costume album, the 1729 *Trachtenkabinet von Siebenbürgen* included in the *Rosefeld Codex* and kept in the Stamp Cabinet of the Romanian Academy, contains 56 watercolours representing costumes from Transylvania.

The early 20th century work *Die Bewohner Siebenbürgens*, the author of which is the Sibiu inhabitant J. Leonhard is completed by numerous coloured drawings representing inhabitants of Transylvania (Sibiu area) wearing their folk costumes.[17]

Some other graphic works resembling greatly the painted *Codex of Graz* date since the second half of the 19th century. The collection *Siebenbürgische Nationaltrachten* is more important, containing 39 gouaches with images of costumes from Transylvania and Wallachia, 12 of which are Romanian. Similar drawings are also to be found in the collection *Siebenbürgische Landerstrachten*.

Our aim is not to analyse these costume albums, as they were pertinently studied by specialists like Eugen Barbul, Viorica Pascu, Ilie Moise, Horst Klusch, Nicolae Dunăre, Elena Secoşan, Paul Petrescu, Al. Alexianu.[18]

By a parallel approach of the peasant costumes represented in such albums and of the costumes of the noble women represented in the votive pictures of the Moldavian churches Bălineşti, Arbore, Humor, and Moldoviţa, and in Wallachia in the little church of the cemetery in Stăneşti, the infirmary of the Cozia and Căluiu monasteries etc. we can make a series of interesting notes on the Romanian folk costume.

The young noble ladies would wear a long, thin veil hanging down their back, made of raw silk, linen or cotton and named *mesal, canovăţ* or *maramă*, a headdress that looks like a peasant silk head kerchief or homespun towel.

The peasant shirt represented in the painted *Codex of Graz* or in the *Trachtenkabinet von Siebenbürgen* is pleated around the neck, with a little collar and large sleeves, hanging freely down and bordered with small button ornaments called *pumnaşi*. The seams appear on the collar, on the sleeves, at the level of the shoulders (stream of ornaments) and on the *pumnaşi* (cuffs).

An identical cut can be observed at the shirts of the noble ladies Iuliana of the church Arbore and Anastasia of the church in Humor, of lady Miliţa Despina and princess Ruxandra in the mural painting of Argeş, and also in the icon-portraits of Ostrov etc.[19]

The costume of the noble ladies and of the peasant women of the 17th century, such as it appears in the *Codex of Graz* and in *Trachtenkabinet von Siebenbürgen* can also have another type of shirt, with long sleeves, twisted around the arms. The sleeve with a small stream of ornament on the shoulder is cut out of a single piece of cloth in the shape of an elongated triangle. The small side of the triangle is sewn on the shoulder while the other two sides which are longer are sewn together so as the form of the sleeve is spiralled.

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[16] *** *Tabula Walachiae Cisalutanae par Frieder Schwantzium, Regiminis Heisteriani Capitaneum*, Ao. 1723.

[17] *Apud* Ilie Moise; Horst Klusch, *Portul popular din judeţul Sibiu* (*Folk Costume in the Sibiu District*), p. 10.

[18] Eugen Barbul, *Costume româneşti din veacul al XVII-lea* (*Romanian Costumes of the 17th century*); Viorica Pascu, *Consideraţii asupra evoluţiei portului popular din Transilvania* (*Considerations on the Evolution of the Folk Costume in Transylvania*); Ilie Moise; Horst Klusch, *Portul popular din judeţul Sibiu* (*Folk Costume in the Sibiu District*); Nicolae Dunăre, *Arta populară din Valea Jiului* (*Folk Art from the Jiu Valley*); Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*Festive Folk Costume in Romania*); Al. Alexianu, *Mode şi veşminte din trecut* (*Fashions and Garments of the Past*)

[19] Corina Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului de curte în Ţările Româneşti* (*History of the Court Costume in the Romanian Principalities*), p. 157.

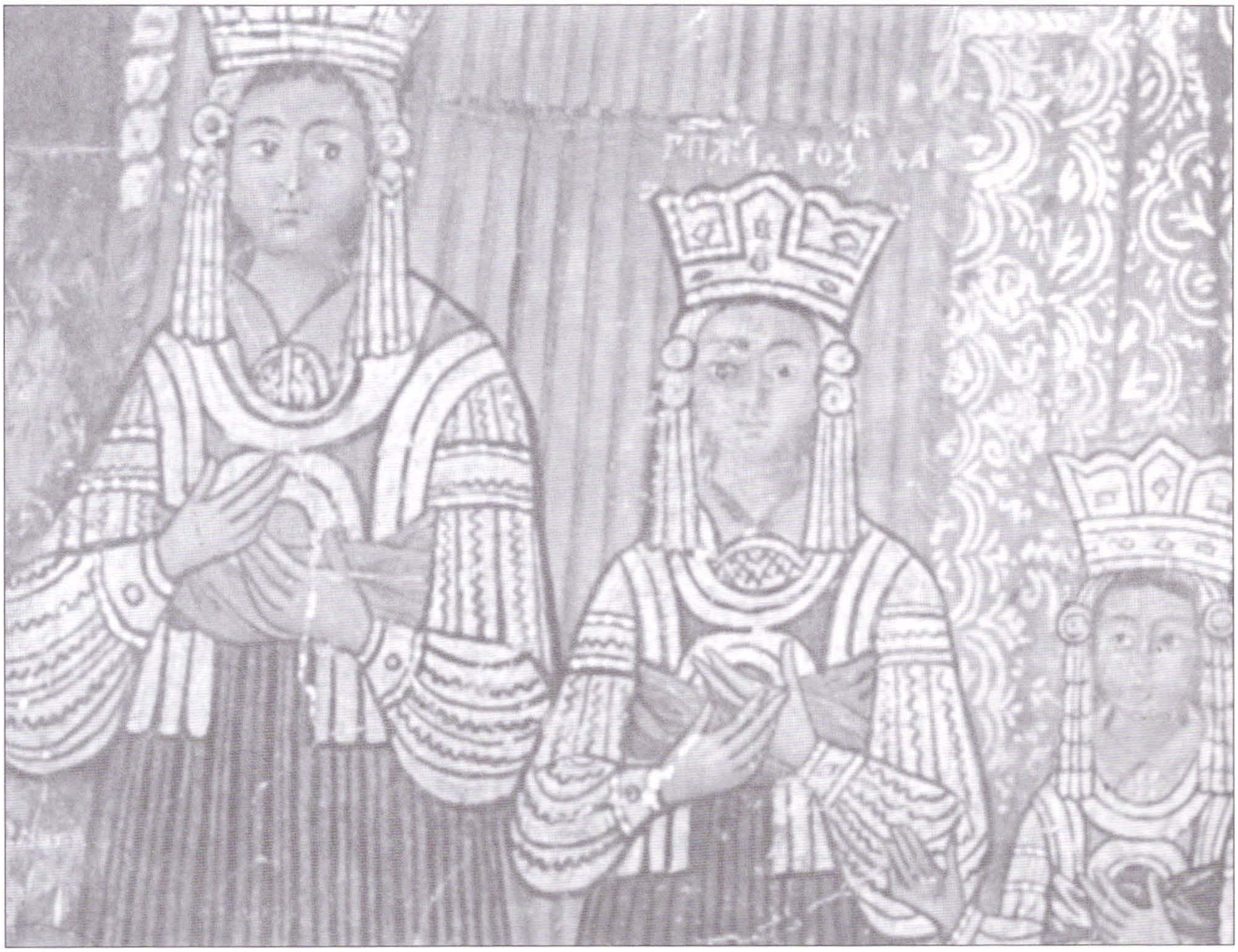
Shirts such as the ones described above can be observed also in the mural paintings that represent the royal and noble families. For example, the shirt with twisted sleeves appears in the portraits of the noble lady buried in the narthex of the Dragomirna Monastery, the noble ladies in the donators' frieze of Căluiu, Cătălina, the wife of the boyar Preda Buzescu embroidered on the veil from Stăneşti, Anastasia and her daughters painted at Cetăţuia etc.[20]

This type of shirt that is present in the medieval pictures and in the costume albums of the 17th and 18th centuries has been preserved a long time in the folk costume worn in the regions of eastern Făgăraş, the Land of Bârsa, Muscel, Covasna and Vrancea.

Therefore, women of different social classes – noble ladies and peasants – are shown as wearing identical shirts in the medieval age, as far as the cut is concerned. The difference consists in the decorative elements which are much richer at the nobles' shirts and are realized by using golden silver thread, silk and pearls.

The similitude of different social class costumes supports the specialists' assumption that there has been a continuous exchange of values between the distinct social categories.

The general image of the costume is completed by the information contained in the dowry acts of the first half of the 19th century, which constitute as important documents as other sources. Such documents include data regarding the number of the costume pieces, the quality of the materials out of which they are made



Detail of the daughters of Ruling Prince Neagoe Basarab from the votive painting at the Episcopal Church of Argeş (the first third of the sixteenth century) and also the ornamentation, all these reflecting the social status and the social category which the person who wears the costume belongs to.

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[20] Corina Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului de curte în Ţările Române*ş*ti (History of the Court Costume in the Romanian Principalities)*, p. 158.

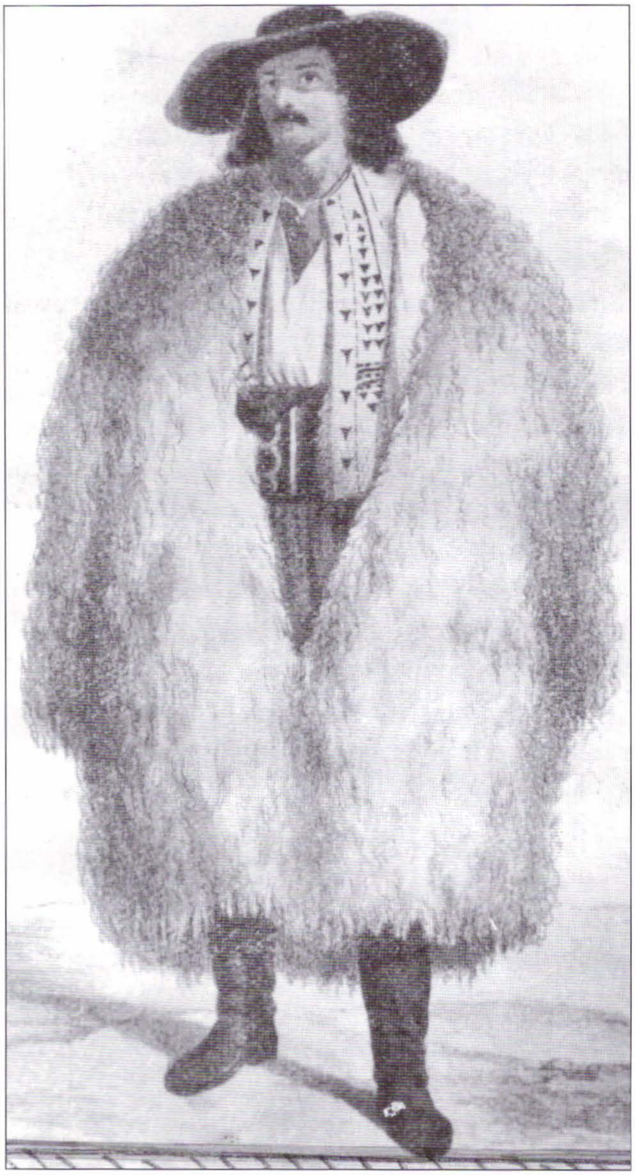
By investigating the dowry acts, we draw the conclusion that some costume pieces of Oriental and Balkan influence were transferred from the fashion of the boyars and wealthy tradesmen to the clothing of the free peasants (*răzeşi* and *moşneni*). This influence appears evident in the mural paintings and in the drawings of the Italian and French artists, among which we name Valério, Lancelot, Doussault, Raffet, Bouquet, and Preziossi who travelled in Wallachia and Moldavia in the first half of the 19th century.[21]

All the categories of sources reflect the fact that in this transitional period the costume of the upper class was composed of a mixture of eastern and western elements and the well-off peasants wear costumes that combine oriental, occidental and folk pieces. At the time when the oriental clothing started to get out of fashion for the upper class, it became available for more modest social categories such as small country boyars or free peasants.

As all the categories of sources certify, a transfer of costume pieces from a social category to another can be observed in the 18th and 19th centuries. The small boyars and then the lower peasants borrowed certain pieces of the costumes of the great estate owners, court nobles, clerks and townsmen, like the long and large cloth coats, ornamented with cord and sometimes furred, some of such coats being common for both men and women. Those who adopted such garments, wearing them up to the present days, often adopted also the terms that named the coats: *cabaniţe, zăbune* (quilted homespun coats), *anterie* (surplices), *dulame, giubele, şube* (long fur coats).[22]

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that people belonging to different social categories have tried to distinguish themselves by their dressing patterns in time, adopting specific costume pieces or characteristic ornamentation and colours that had to underline their social status. Thus, garments have also identified and classified the members of different social classes, acting as acknowledgement symbols for the people who have chosen to wear them.

As all the sources indicate (and we have mentioned the most significant of them), we notice the fact that the decorative spaces of the fundamental pieces of male and female costumes gained contour in the medieval age, and also the chromatic range specific to different ethnographic zones of Romania was settled, conferring an original aesthetic view of the Romanian ethnics.



Muscel shepherd wearing a large rimmed hat, a waistcoat, a wide belt (chimir), and a fleecy long overcoat (engraving by Michel Bouquet)

What did the mid-19th century actually mean for the evolution of the folk costume?

Experts consider that the period of the 19th century has been the most valuable stage in the evolution of the folk artistic creation. At that time, the folk costume reached its highest point in artistic value and it was widespread and daily worn in the rural communities all over the country.

This flourishing period also explains the Romanian participation in the great universal exhibitions of Paris (1867), Vienna (1873), and again Paris (1889 and 1900) with rich collections of folk costumes, representative for the different ethnographic zones of the country.

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[21] G. Oprescu, *Ţările Române văzute de artişti francezi* (*The Romanian Principalities Seen by French Artists*).

[22] Gh. Pârnuţă, *Rucăr, monografie sociologică* (*Rucăr, A Sociological Monograph*), Bucharest, 1972, p. 223.

These collections got the interest of the public and stirred the world's admiration.

It is not surprising that Alexandru I. Odobescu, the general commissioner who played an essential part in the organizing of the 1867 universal exhibition of Paris was the first cultural personality who talked of a "Romanian artistic style" and of the "principles of a national aesthetics". He had a deep belief in the value of the native cultural patrimony and in the aesthetic sense of the Romanian people, whose originality could be remarked in "its productions (...) from household utensil to the most monumental building".[23]

Odobescu was also the first to initiate the studies and interpretations of the documents referring to the genesis of the folk costume, conducting complex researches that led him to the conclusion that there were great resemblances between some costume pieces of the Dacians represented on the Column of Trajanus in Rome and the costumes of the Romanian peasants.

Some of the important Romanian painters of the period displayed their work at the universal exhibitions: Theodor Aman, Henri Trenk, Carol Popp de Szathmary, Nicolae Grigorescu, and others. The folklore researchers of today find precious historical data in their paintings.

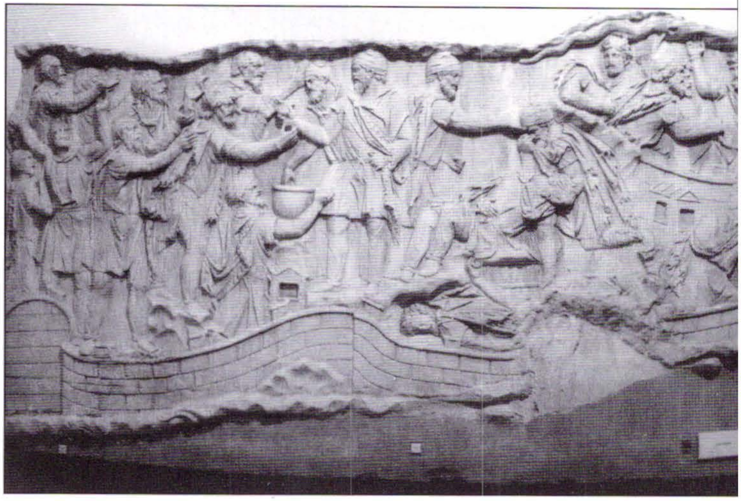
The great painters are worth praising for the way they knew how to integrate their models in their living natural environment, representing them in their daily routine, working as usual or celebrating and wearing their richly ornamented costumes that conferred them such individuality and distinction.

It should also be mentioned the extremely relevant fact that during the campaigns for the preparation and organization of the universal exhibitions the problem of settling ethnographic museums was raised for the first time and the first concrete solution to it was the foundation of the museum in the Trocadero Palace from France.

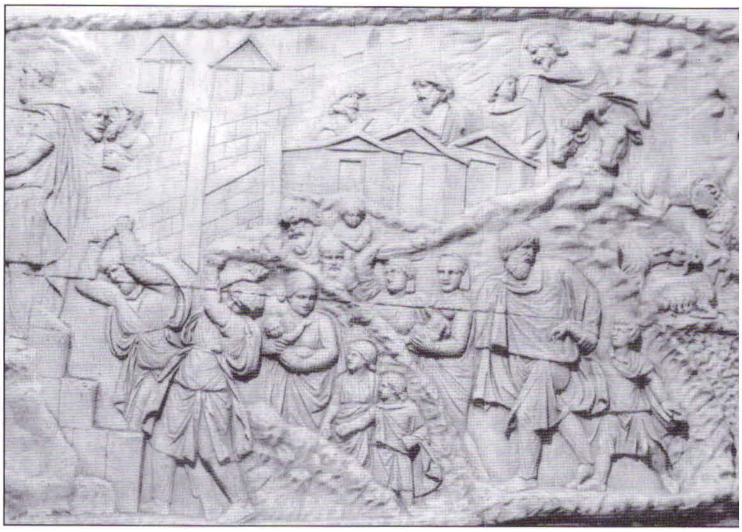
Obviously, the Romanian participation to the ample universal exhibitions could not but influence deeply the domestic culture.

The Romanian society has been formed around certain "key" cultural elements, around symbols and signs that have defined the essence of the Romanian people, distinguishing it from the surrounding ethnics.

The duration, originality, and authenticity of our folk art as well as the wide range of its expressive forms represent convincing arguments of the Romanians' ethnic origin, that being one of the central ideas in the building of the Romanians' national awareness.



Dacian men wearing loose shirts, hoods, and shepherd caps (detail from the Column of Trajanus in Rome)



Dacian women wearing head kerchiefs (detail from the Column of Trajanus in Rome)

The interest of the intellectuals and of diverse companies and state owned or private associations in promoting and preserving the folk costume continued in the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. The "Elena Doamna" Home, the "Furnica" Society, the "Albina" Society, the Committee of the Reunited Romanian Women of Sibiu, the Administration of the Royal Estate, the „Domniţa Maria" Society a.s.o. participated in the universal exhibitions by bringing in Romanian collections of costumes, textiles and embroideries.

Many of these associations set up numerous workshops of "national costumes", preserving the ancient decorative patterns and the old dyeing procedures, involving vegetal colours. At first, they played a positive role, aiming at the stimulation of the folk artistic creation in the traditional spirit as well as at the identification of supplementary financial resources for several members of the rural communities.

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[23] Al.I. Odobescu, *Artele în România* (*Arts in Romania*), p. 10.

By adapting to several demands, these workshops gradually distanced their production from the valuable traditional creation.

At the same time, the albums of so-called "national motives", the different catalogues and sample books edited by commerce chambers circulated in villages and some workshops used them, contributing to the degradation of the artistic taste and the authentic folk creation by spreading some hybrid decorative elements that did not observe the local and regional particularities.

An important moment of the Transylvanian Romanians' movement of cultural and political emancipation occurred with the setting up of the "Transylvanian Association for the Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People" (ASTRA) at Sibiu, at the half of the 19th century. To demonstrate that the Romanians living in Transylvania are the first inhabitants of this land and they are in majority over other ethnic groups, ASTRA gathered historic, linguistic, and demographic arguments but also ethnographic arguments, specifically an impressive ethno-folkloric treasure.

The setting up of the ASTRA association was benefic to the promotion of the folk costume, as the Transylvanian association conducted a vast and fruitful activity on this realm.

After 1900, ASTRA intensified its action to reach the setting up of a museum of the association, among its most important goals. The first appeal for setting up the museum was issued in 1904 in the *Transilvania* magazine of the ASTRA association. The author of the article warned the readers that the innovations that the modern civilisation brought along provoked the disappearance of the most specific testimonies regarding the way of life of the Romanian people. Under these circumstances, the museum ethnographic section would have had the task to put together "(...) an educative reflection of the complete present life of our people in all its forms of manifestation, revealing especially the distinctive notes that characterize the specific existence of the Romanian people and form its unique ethnic quintessence".[24]

The bases of the "ASTRA Historical and Ethnographic Museum" were set on August 19th and 20th, 1905. On this occasion, the first ethnographic exhibition was opened, having as an important theme "The Folk Type and Costume".

Talking about the folk costume, the museum director, Octavian C. Tăslăuanu, underlined the truth that it constituted the characteristic feature of each people and the Romanian costume, preserved "(...) stubbornly in many parts", represented "(...) a treasure that we can be proud of".[25] He went on by saying that it was necessary to purchase all the old costumes and keep account of their origin and dating.

The photos of costumes taken by Emil Fischer and registered in the Archives of the ASTRA Museum in Sibiu are of undeniable documentary and artistic value to any specialist of our days.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a generation of intellectuals of large humanistic horizon attempted a thorough analysis, based on solid theoretical knowledge, of the artistic manifestations specific to the Romanian peasant. For example, Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, an expert in museum science who had studied in Berlin, wrote an article in the popular encyclopaedic magazine *Albina* in 1901, in which he appreciated the artistic instinct of the folk that "has maintained and imprinted the folk costume, practices and songs, and the whole harmonious appearance that distinguishes our mountain people from their neighbours and from other nationalities. Besides the ancestors' religion, the folk poetry and the peasant household art are the most precious and pure heritage that we have...".[26]

Tzigara-Samurcaş noted that it was necessary to gather all the traditional values in a museum, but not as in a kind of cemetery or storing house of purchased objects. The museum should be a live institution, in contact with the public "(...) whose taste it should awaken and guide on the true path...".[27]

Only a year later after the setting up of the ASTRA Museum, the bases of the Museum of National Art in Bucharest were founded on the 1st of October, 1906 and Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş was appointed director. The collections of this museum, later enriched by consecutive generations of museum curators and researchers, built up the Museum of Folk Art, run for several decades by Tancred Bănăţeanu, a reputed theoretician of the Romanian folk art. The museum changed its name to The Romanian Peasant Museum in 1990.

The works of the talented painters Henri Trenk and Carol Popp de Szathmary, donated by King Carol I and representing Romanian peasants in folk costumes were exhibited in the third hall of the Museum of National Art.

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[24] Anca Goţia, *Preocupări de folclor şi etnografie în revista sibiană* Transilvania (*Folklore and Ethnography Notes in the* Transilvania *Magazine of Sibiu*), p. 121.

[25] *Ibidem*, p. 124.

[26] Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, *Memorii* (*Memories*), I (1872-1910), p. 142.

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 143.

We find a detailed description of that third hall in the issue of July 15th, 1907, of the magazine *Viaţa literară şi artistică* (*Artistic and Literary Life*): "In another room there are displayed in a perfect order, observing the counties and the regions, all the national costumes that can be thus properly studied, as they are carefully placed in the Museum. Richly adorned costumes of different regions can be seen on natural size lay figures, arranged by the concern of the director, a refined aesthetician, to create the appearance of life...".[28] Reading through this article, we see that Tzigara-Samurcaş had a modern view upon exhibiting the peasant costumes.

Remembering the day when the Sovereign Carol I visited the museum, Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş noted that the King had been pleased by "(...) the rich national costumes that, following the Queen's example, were admitted to the official balls and receptions at the palace and not only the wives of the peasant parliament members would wear them but also the ladies in the high society of Bucharest".[29]

Then, in 1909, at the Folk Art International Exhibition in Berlin, Romania won the first place for the high aesthetic value of its exhibits and the folk costumes on display captured the admiration of the art critics in Germany and Austro-Hungary.

Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, the director of the Museum of National Art, pointed out that "(...) as far as the peasant costume is concerned, no other people in the world can compete with us...".[30]

Romania obtained the same remarkable success at the folk art international exhibitions of Amsterdam (1909), Vienna (1910), Rome (1911), Barcelona (1929) and Brussels (1935).

The lectures that Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş delivered at Berlin and Amsterdam amplified the Romanians' success. As *L'Indépendence roumaine* of May 26th, 1909, specified: «La presse hollandaise est unanime à reconnaître la supériorité des productions roumaines sur toutes les autres qui figurent à cette exposition dont la section roumaine semble être le clou...».[31]

The unification with the mother-country of the Romanian provinces Bessarabia and Bucovina and of Transylvania, Banat, Crişana and Maramureş on December 1st, 1918, under the reign of King Ferdinand, fulfilled the secular dream of the people and changed Romania's political status, raising the prestige of the country among the European nations.

The setting up of the Romanian Social Institute, under the leadership of professor Dimitrie Gusti, has contributed essentially to the progress of field research conducted by specialists in humanities, geographers, historians, musicologists and physicians who applied the monographic method, based on the vivid, direct, and non-mediated observation of social life.

At European level, the Society of the United Nations organized the first International Congress of Folk Arts in Prague in 1928. Romania was represented at the Congress by three of its great personalities of the time: Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, the director of the Museum of National Art and the reputed folklorists Ion Muşlea and Artur Gorovei.

The folk artistic manifestations contributed to the enhancing and enrichment of the common spiritual treasure of mankind, conferring to the nations a permanent prestige and a convincing justification of their right to independent existence.

This is the period when the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania was set up under the leadership of Professor Romulus Vuia (1932). At the same time, The National Park of Cluj is opened and Professor Dimitrie Gusti supervised the inauguration of the Village Museum in Bucharest, in 1936. The Village Museum has grown to be one of the most famous open air museums in the world.

Romania took part in the International Exhibition of Paris in 1937 and its pavilion was organized by the Royal Cultural Foundations. As first rank personality of the cultural life in Romania, scholar Dimitrie Gusti was appointed general commissioner of the exhibition.

The restaurant-pavilion that the architect Octav Doicescu projected and that was built in Paris on that occasion was a great success. The orchestra conducted by Grigoraş Dinicu, the pan flute interpretation of Fănică Luca and the songs of Maria Tănase created a specifically Romanian atmosphere that enchanted the public. The beautiful folk costumes from Oltenia and Wallachia that the young students who accompanied the visitors wore added to the charm and everybody was seduced by the rhythmical dance of the *căluşari*.

Romania occupied the 11th place of 48 participant countries.

It should be underlined that the Tailoring and Fashion Academy presented its products for the first time at this international competition. What did this institution exhibit at the 1937 International Exhibition of Paris? There were a lot of raw silk or cotton and silk materials, headdresses, veils, dresses, suits, but also folk costumes and costume pieces specific to the counties Mehedinţi, Banat, Argeş and Muscel and all these were awarded prizes.[32]

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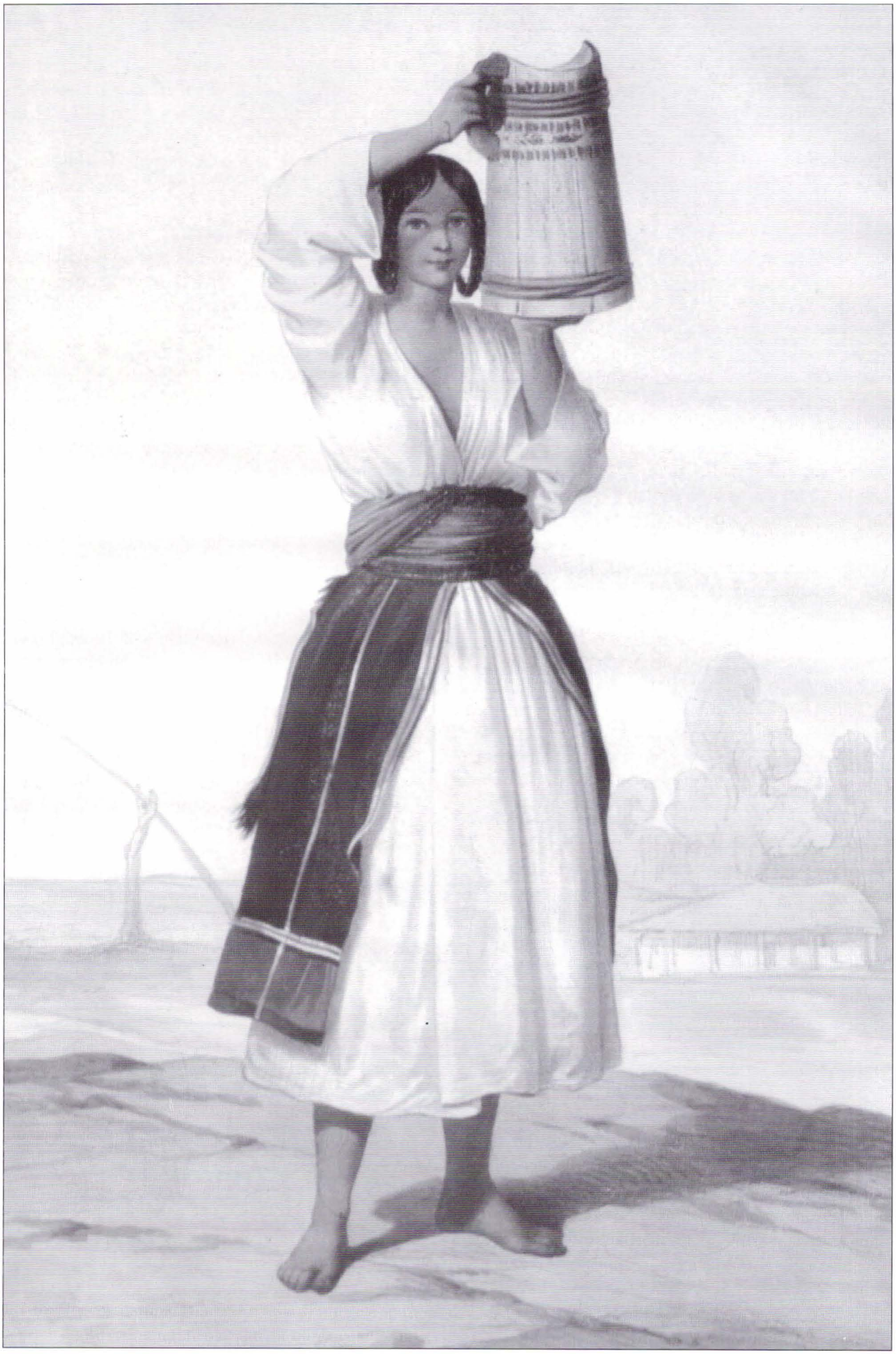
[28] Al. Tzigara-Samurcaş, *Memorii* (*Memories*), I (1872-1910), p. 233.

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 247.

[30] *Ibidem*, p. 269.

[31] *Ibidem*, p. 272.

[32] *** *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques dans la vie moderne - Paris, 1937. Catalogue général officiel*, I, pp. 799-803.



As in previous exhibitions, the 1937 event set to the fore the Latin origin of the Romanian people and the affinities of Romanians to the French by community of race, language and soul. That was the general tone of the work of Jacques Lassaigne and Paul Desfeuille, who collected the opinions of 83 French scholars and politicians on our country and on the freshness and authenticity of the Romanian rural life.[33]

Dimitrie Gusti's modern view on the exhibitions stimulated the interest of Romanian intellectuals for purchasing and treasuring the traditional values of the village. As a consequence, many local ethnographic museums were set up along the 20th century.

The most precious documentary source of today on the evolution of the folk costume is the collection of folk costume pieces and assemblies preserved in the big museums like the Romanian Peasant Museum, The "D. Gusti" National Village Museum, The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania, The Ethnographic Museum of Moldavia, The ASTRA National Museum Complex, The Museum of Banat, The Museum of the Porţile-de-Fier (Iron Gates), The Museum of Oltenia, The Museum of Bucovina, The Ethnographic Museum of Braşov, the folk art museums in Constanţa and Tulcea etc.

The costume collections treasured in these museums represent the authentic and original stage of the peasant clothing at the peak of its development in the period between the second half of the 19th century and the end of the millennium.

Starting from all these documentary sources, the numerous folk costume zonal monographs, the synthetic studies on the typology of the festive folk costume[34] and the rich material collected during the field investigations for the project of the *Romanian Ethnographic Atlas*, we try to analyze in the following pages the specific features of the Romanian folk costume, pointing out those artistic forms that finally converge to the shaping of the autochthonous aesthetical vision.

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[33] Laurenţiu Vlad, *Imagini ale identităţii naţionale* (*Images of the National Identity*), p. 116.

[34] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România* (*The Folk Costume in Romania*); Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*The Festive Folk Costume in Romania*).

← *Peasant woman of the Vlaşca district (engraving by Michel Bouquet)*

The unity and diversity of the Romanian folk costume

Anybody who would visit a Romanian village on a holiday or would take part in the solemn national moments that culminate with the date of the December 1st, when the Great Unification of all the Romanians is celebrated would be given the opportunity to see the folk costume at home in all its splendour, richness and diversity.

On such occasions and especially in the folk costume parade organized simultaneously at Alba Iulia and in the main towns of the country, people would proudly wear the garments that have accompanied them along history until the beginning of the third millennium and that reflect a rich experience of the collective life and Romanian feeling and sensibility.

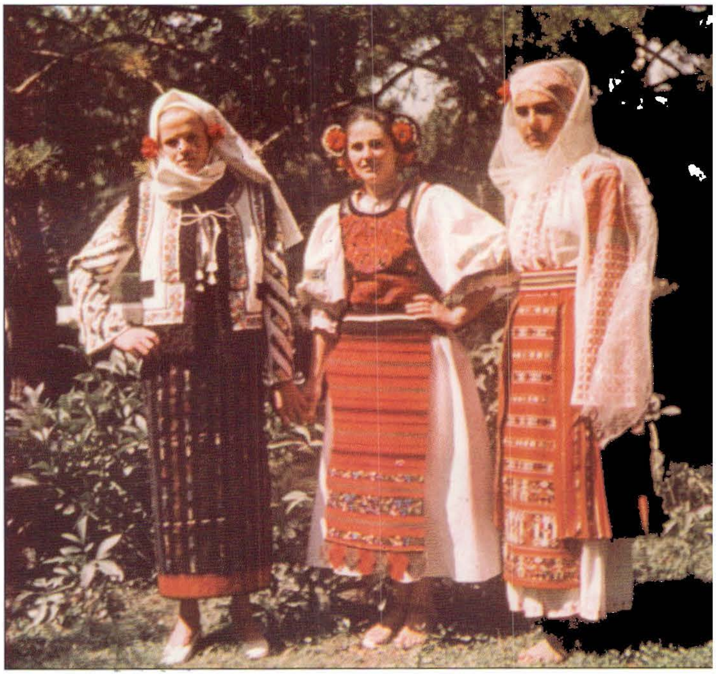
But where does in fact lie the uniqueness and the specificity of the folk costume? As a product of the household textile industry and using materials provided by the traditional occupations of the Romanian people – agriculture and cattle breeding – the folk costume is characterized by a powerful stylistic unity and by the preservation of some archaic elements as regards the cut, sewing and weaving techniques on one hand and the decorative and chromatic elements on the other hand.

The morphological and decorative unity of the Romanian folk costume is explained by the constant use of the same raw materials (vegetal fibres: hemp, flax, cotton and animal fibres: wool, raw silk) all over the Romanian space and by using the old cut system based on the technique of cutting the material straight and the most archaic ornamental embroidery techniques: sewing *warped on the thread* (*urzit pe fir*), sewing *warped on the pleats* (*urzit pe creţuri*)[1] and sewing *on the inside* (*pe dos*), as well as by using the main, general set of ornamental motives.

The continuity of certain motives in the decorative composition of the costume is illustrative for the existence of a plastic vocabulary which is common to the European and extra-European spaces but which has taken different forms in different civilisations. The origins of such motives are to be found in prehistoric ages; they are linked to the cults of fecundity and fertility and to the solar cult. Many of them, such as the lozenge, the circle, the meander, the zigzagged line, the triangle, the star, and the ram horns are widespread universally.

The ancient geometrical motives that can be found at the old costumes which are preserved in museum collections turn from a graphic alphabet into disparate signs and symbols as their magic and religious significance has been lost. Today, they mean to us no more than the plastic elements of some compositions and it is possible to combine them into an infinite variety of modes.

The hard-working peasant housewives have sewn zigzags and meanders of an ancestral graphic system, using threads of dyed cotton, gold, silver and silk.



Traditional costumes for the ethnographic zones Bucovina, Năsăud, Romanaţi

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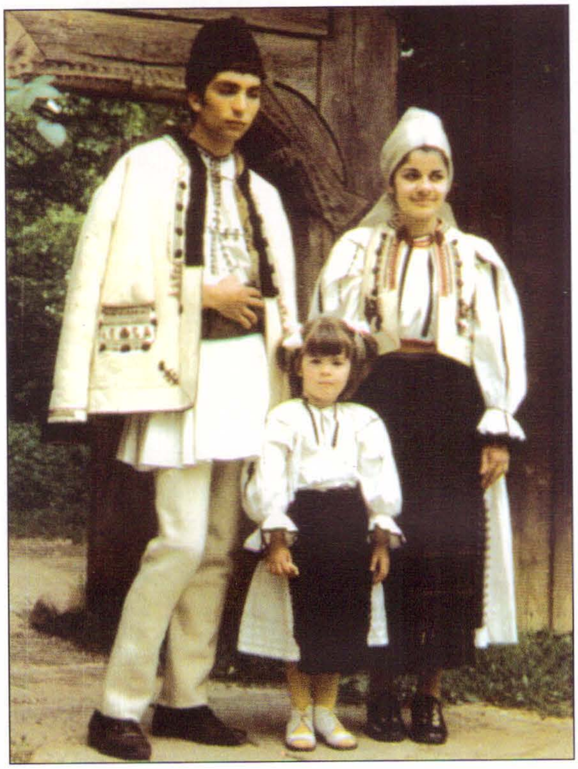
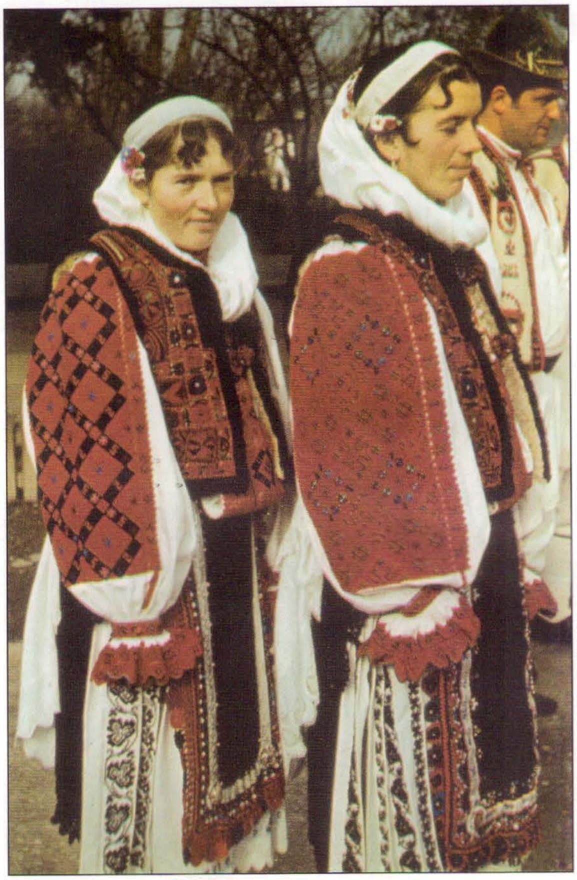
[1] Decorative technique largely spread in the Western Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries (Spain, England, French, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Italy), but also used in the folk art of Estonia, Finland, Russia and on costume pieces of south-western Asia. See also: G. Oprescu, *Probleme româneşti de artă ţărănească* (*Romanian Issues of the Peasant Art*), p. 175; Nicolae Dunăre, *Influenţe reciproce în portul şi textilele populare de pe ambele versante ale Carpaţilor Meridionali* (*Mutual Influences in Folk Costume and Textiles on both Mountainsides of the Southern Carpathians*); Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*Festive Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 56.



Zone Mărginimea Sibiului



Zone Pădurenii Hunedoarei

← *Traditional Vlaşca costume (page 20)*
Traditional Romanaţi costumes (page 21)

These women have opened their eyes to the world in wooden cradles carved with solar symbols, they have attempted the first steps on the adorned porch of the house, they have read the love's first thrill in the signs marked on the distaff, they have woven whole rows of the trees of life on their dowry carpets, they have meticulously embroidered the stars of the sky on the wedding shirts of their children and they have prepared attentively the "garments" for the last voyage towards the meeting with the ancestors.

Geometrical motives are often associated with other categories of ornaments on the same object. For example, symbolical religious ornaments (cross, communion bread and *pristornic* – pattern to imprint ritual bread), zoomorphic (ram horns, deer), avimorphic (bird-shaped), skeomorphic (referring to the peasant's tools: pitchfork, hook, chain loop, pit-bucket), anthropomorphic (eye, eye and brow) and especially stylized vegetal motives (flowers, leaves, bows, fruits) decorate the same clothing piece. This association of ornaments is not at all irritating but it creates totally new plastic effects as the philosopher Lucian Blaga rightly notices: "(...) as far as dominants and proportions are involved, we find out that the sovereignty of the straight-line geometrical forms and of the stylized figuration is more decided in the Romanian ornamentation than in other cultural systems and the combination of geometrical and stylized organic motives is most proportioned. Therefore, the Romanian folk art excels in a prominent stylistic thoroughness".[2]

The discreet decoration, disposed in equilibrium in well-delimited ornamental fields, underlines the cut and also the human figure, conferring people a sculpture-like and extremely distinguished aspect.

The alternation of decorated surfaces with pieces empty of ornamentation gives a special rhythm and plastic expressivity to the whole decorative composition.

While the principles of representation, the rules of artistic expression, repetition, symmetry, alternation and rhythm are observed, the modes of plastic expression chosen by the folk creators to combine the ornamental motives into decorative structures and the relations that are set up between the ornamental terms of the composition differ from one creation to another, conferring to each piece its unrepeatable personality.

The same motive is differently interpreted and is attributed different meanings, values and semantic valence. The creators achieve this effect by rendering the motive by different techniques or by placing it in different positions and proportions in the ornamental composition.

Chromatics is another element that gives stylistic unity to the costume. Colour has an essentially decorative function, stressing the ornamental composition. The folk creator knows how to give tonal unity to the costume, playing upon subtle colour match. She masters the laws of contrast and harmony, in the spirit and taste of classic equilibrium.

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[2] Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii* (*Trilogy of Culture*), p. 214.

While red and black, to which golden and silver threads were added were the basic colours used in the decoration of traditional costume pieces, the chromatic range has been enriched in time so as different colours have been used to create harmonious and highly refined compositions that dose artfully the chromatic accents.

To stress the ornamental motives, the folk creator has resorted to different shades of the same colour: dark red, light red, grass green (light), noble green (dark), dark blue, whitish yellow, pear yellow (light), reddish yellow, orange yellow, dark yellow etc.

Within the traditional rural community, colours have prominently underlined differences of age, civil status, occasion, provenience region and ethnicity.

By their intrinsic energy, colours enhance the aesthetic emotion, by amplifying the plastic expressivity of the whole composition.

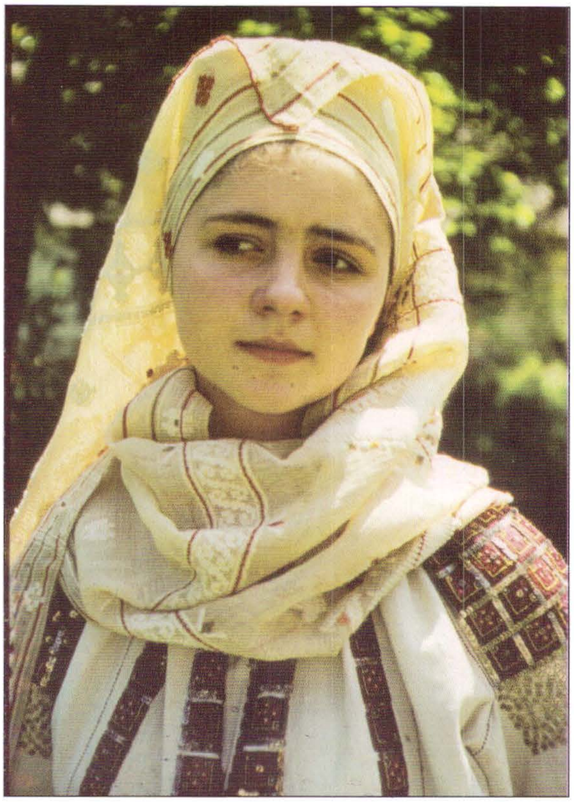
Without considering the structural unity of the folk costume as a rigid and static object, many intellectuals of the latter half of the 20th century, who demonstrated the historical continuity of the Romanian people on their ancient territory by using the folk costume argument, noticed the wide zonal range of rich and diverse morphological and decorative forms and also the geographical conditioning of the practicing of different traditional occupations.

"Almost any small county – George Bariţiu remarked – and almost any village has its own costume by which one can easily distinguish those villagers from the inhabitants of other villages".[3]

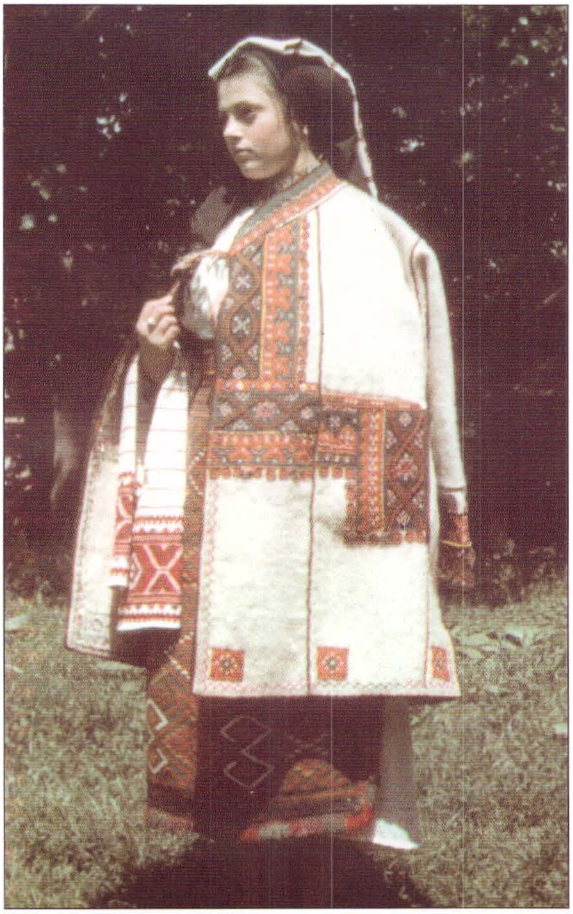
Different costumes have developed along time under specific living circumstances in the territorial-administrative units of the Romanian land, named *countries* in the Middle Age and thus the "types of costume" have been identified in each *land* (Romanian *ţară*): Land of Lovişte, Land of Haţeg, Land of Făgăraş, Land of Oaş, Land of Maramureş, Land of Zarand, Land of Vrancea a.s.o.

These territorial units that gathered contour under the economic circumstances and social relations in the feudal epoch constitute the bases of the ethnographic zones in Romania. The ethnographic zones are characterized by cohesion, stability and ethnic and cultural continuity and at the same time they preserve the essential features of the Romanian people.

The ethnographic zones have always constituted creative units that treasure and generate spirituality, values and traditions some of which are local and others which are common to all Romanian counties.



District of Vlaşca



Region of Bihor

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[3] *** *Călindarul pentru poporul român* (*The Calendar for the Romanian People*), pp. 38-39.

Each type of costume has numerous local and zonal variants, developed in different political, historical, social-economic and cultural contexts that are marked by characteristics of time, place and human group. A deep connection and interdependence can be observed by comparing a prototype of the type of costume to its variants.

The clothing assembly that constitutes a type of costume has a systemic character as any change induced upon an element of the costume causes the modification of all the pieces that make up that particular type of costume.

We subscribe to the conclusion of the book *Se vêtir pour dire*, by Yvonne Elisabeth Broutin (p. 13), that the costume « C'est une totalité qui est plus que la somme de ses éléments. C'est un ensemble mouvant d'éléments interdépendants, car la modification d'un seul élément modifie les autres éléments, et donc le système tout entier ».

The local-zonal variants of a type of costume must be compared to the prototype that has generated them, revealing the common elements on one hand and the particular singular elements that characterize each variant on the other hand.

The prototype constitutes the schematic species that is representative and defining and it reunites the essential and determinant features that generate the zonal variants. The variants are just derivative forms of the prototype in point of morphological structure and decorative and chromatic composition. A variant always observes the structural scheme of the prototype. The syntax of the ornamental fields is the same for the pieces that compose the local-zonal variants of a certain type of costume, while the particularities of artistic expression and the colour options may differ.

Each creator brings his or her own contribution to this decorative "scheme", considering the aesthetical traditions, the stylistic vocabulary, the ornamental traditional repertory and the techniques used in a specific zone and combining all these elements to confer personality and individuality to each local variant.

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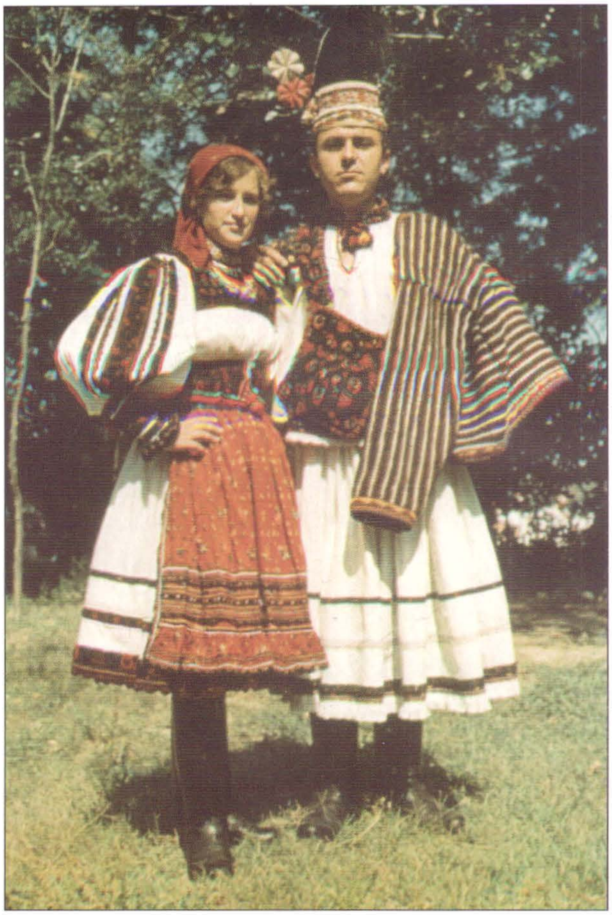
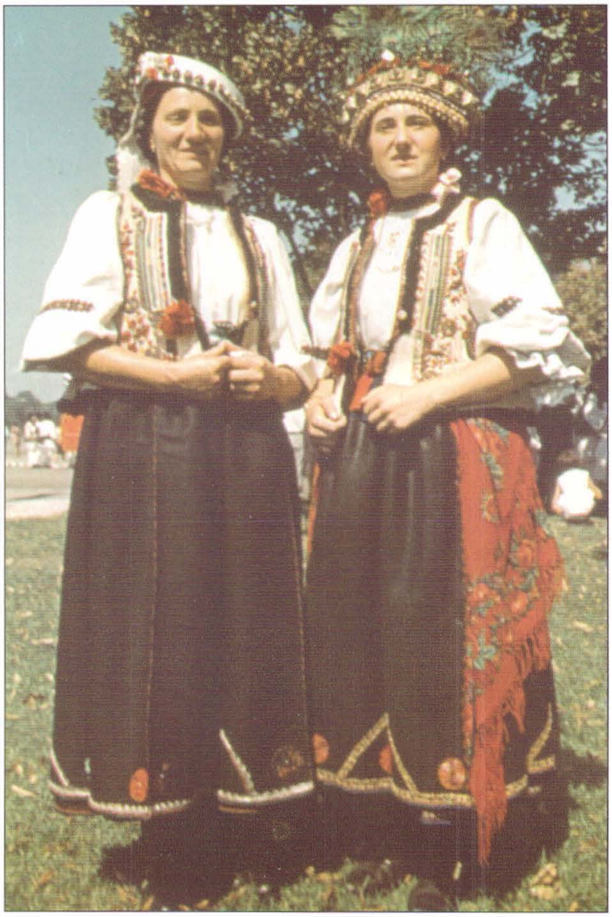
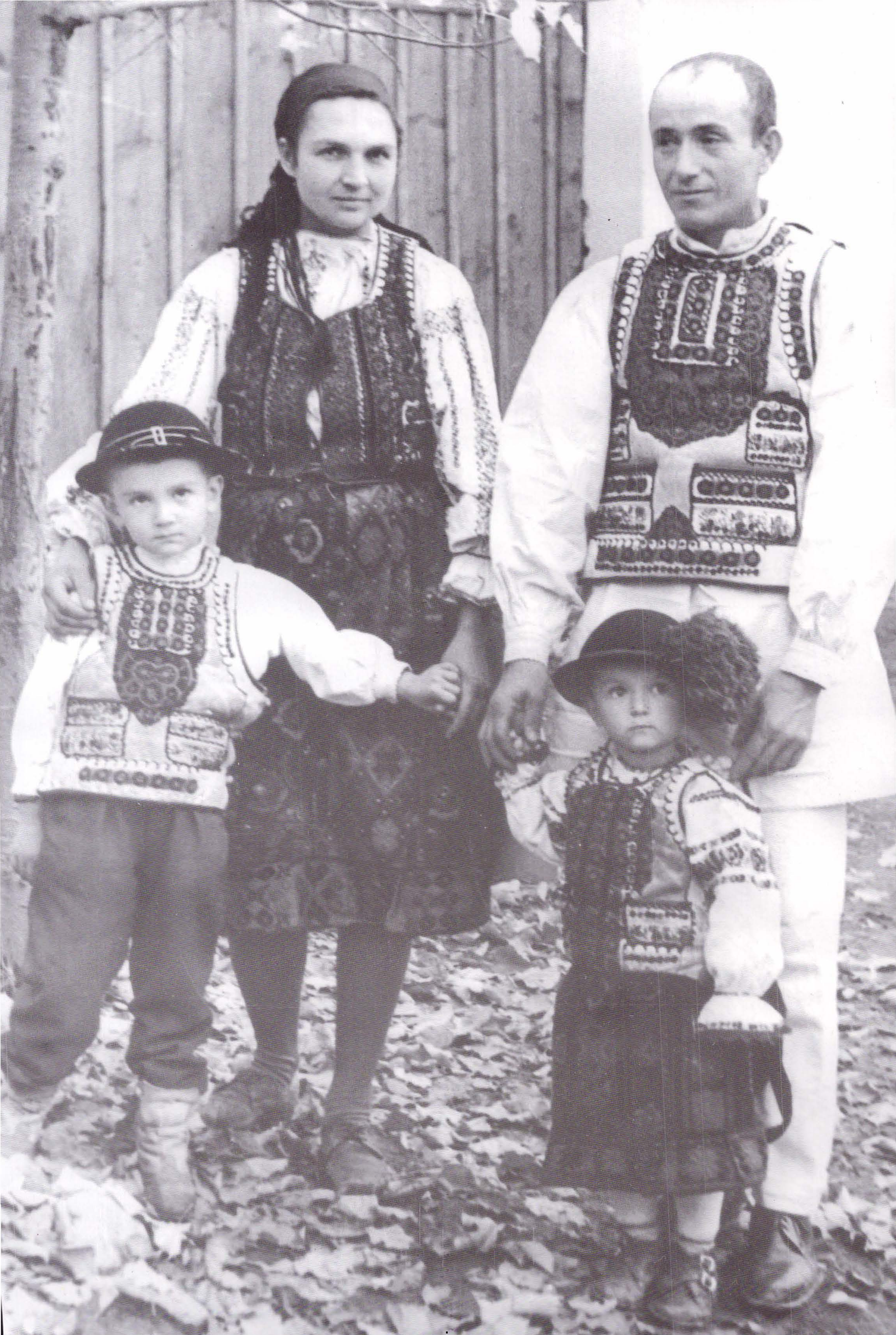
The family of furrier Dumitru Sofonea of Drăguş (Land of Făgăraş)

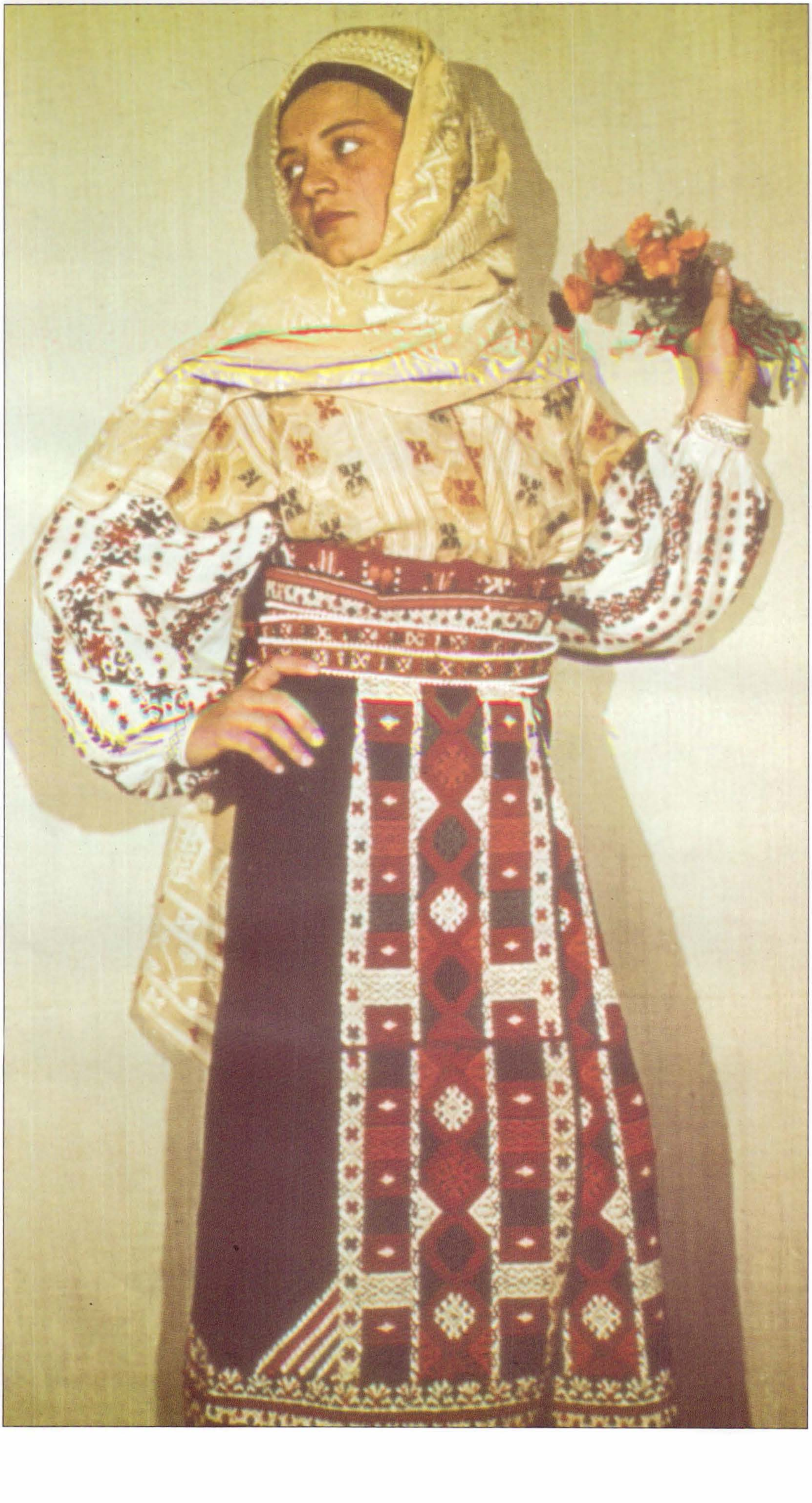


Region of Oaş



Region of Târnave





The typology of the women's folk costume

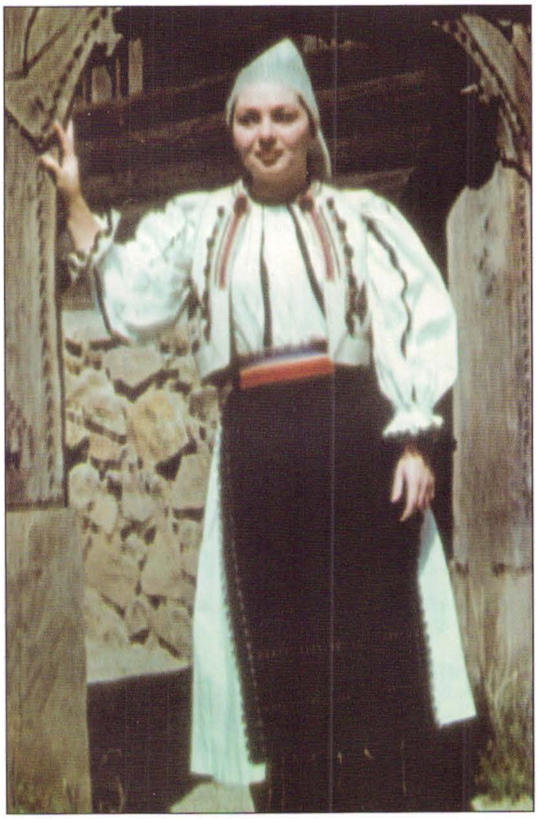
The pieces that cover partially or totally the laps of the shirt have a determinant role in the setting up of the typology of the traditional women's costume. That is why these pieces are called "key-pieces" or "compulsory complements" in the ethnographic literature.[1]

The form of the "key-pieces" and their wearing mode – suspended, tightly wrapped or pleated – have generated the three basic types of the traditional Romanian garment: *the costume with catrinţă*, *the costume with fotă*, and *the costume with vâlnic* (*catrinţă*, *fotă*, *vâlnic* are three pieces of hand-woven cloth that are wrapped around the waist in different ways). To this type, a new type, with skirt, has been added. The other variants are determined by associating different elements of the costume.

The category of complementary pieces comprises diverse modes of organizing the decorative fields, generating a suite of ornamental and chromatic variants.

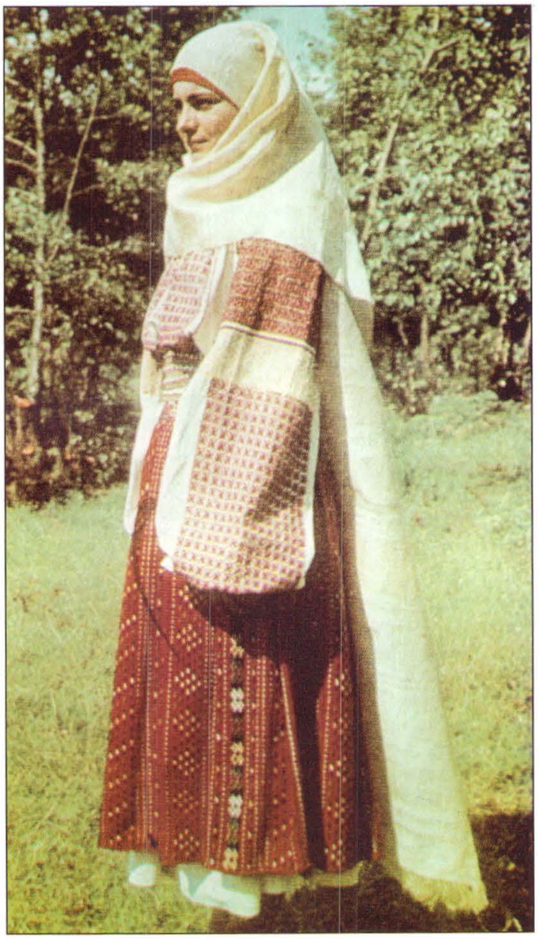
The rich and varied terminology that refers to the pieces worn over the laps of the shirt and the intense circulation of these terms in the space of the Carpathians and the Balkans certify their long duration since very old times.

Among the partial leg coverings, that leave the side parts of the laps of the long shirt visible, the *catrinţă* is widely spread in Transylvania, Banat, Oltenia, Wallachia, Bărăgan, Dobrudja, and partially in Moldavia.



*Costume with **catrinţă** (Mărginimea Sibiului)*

*Costume with **vâlnic** (Mehedinţi District)*



← *Costume with **maramă** (head cover), shirt, and **peşteman**, specific for Răcăciuni (Bacău District)*

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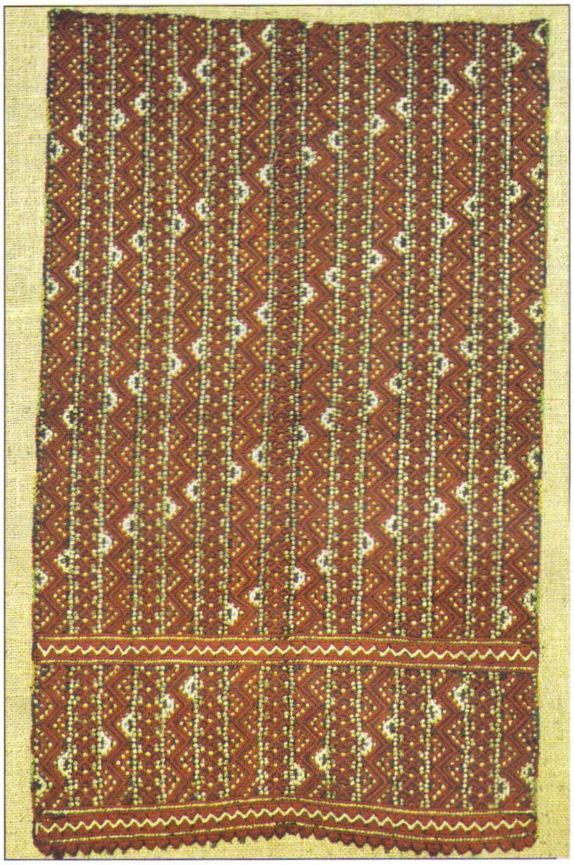
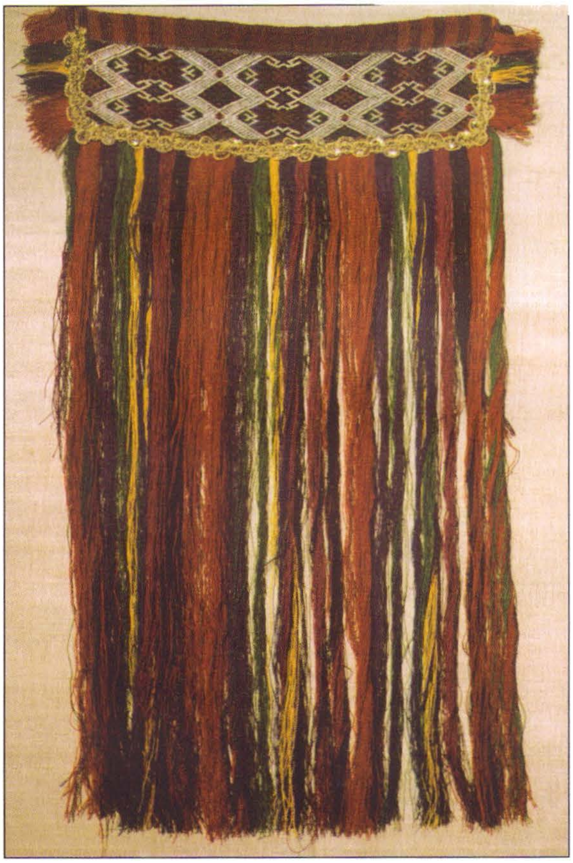
[1] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România* (*The Folk Costume in Romania*), p.69; is the first fundamental synthesis on the typology of the folk costume. The book is founded on the analysis of the museum collections in Romania and abroad.



Catrinţă (Olt District)

Opreg (Banat zone)



The *catrinţă* is a hand-woven rectangular material with dimensions varying from one ethnographic zone to another from 40 to 60 centimetres (the width) and from 60 to 80 centimetres (the length). Two pieces are worn simultaneously, to the front and to the back of the shirt, with the smaller side attached to the waist by girdles. The *catrinţă* is an archaic element of Thracian origin, spread in the Aegean-Mediterranean world and in the Carpathian-Balkan space[2] (it is represented on the figurines that the archaeologists have discovered at Vinča and Cârna). It is known under different names – according to field materials gathered as a result of the researches with questionnaires on the folk costume, conducted for the *Romanian Ethnographic Atlas* (*Atlasul Etnografic Român* – AER) – and sometimes there are different terms referring to *catrinţă* that circulate in the same zone: *boscea, zăvelcă, prestelcă, fâstâc, opreg, foaie, zadie, păstură, pânzătură, zapreg, cotreanţă, şurţ, cârpă de încins, otă, cretincioară* etc.

The raw materials used to make the *catrinţă* are wool and hair (drawn out of the wool by using special combs), hemp, cotton and more rarely raw silk. Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the "wire" (metallic thread) was added to the former materials, along with coloured silk, velvet and cloth.

Woven in the weaving loom in the technique with two or four threads, the *catrinţă* is ornamented by using different systems that vary from one ethnographic zone to another in point of the organization of the decorative fields, the compositional manner and the applying and interpretation of the ornamental elements, in point of weaving technique, of ornamentation, and of colouring manner.

The *opreg cu franjuri* (fringed apron) is a sub-variant of the *catrinţă*, spread in the Balkan space and the Mediterranean basin. It is made of two distinctive parts: an upper part which is woven, called *petec* (= patch; actually, it is a smaller *catrinţă*), of maximum 30 centimetres in length and a row of tassels, 50 to 60 centimetres long, that are attached to the patch and fall as vertical strips down the laps of the shirt. An older variant of the *opreg*, according to the field information and the bibliography, has a longer patch and shorter tassels (fringes).

In time, the patch has reduced its dimensions and the tassels have been made longer. The proportion between the woven part and the length of the fringes, the decorative composition of the patch and the chromatic selection of the tassels (fringes) serve as distinctive marks of the provenience zone of a certain costume.

The weaving techniques and the ornamentation of the patch, alternating the thin woolen thread and the golden and silver threads, resemble the sumptuous oriental textures.

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[2] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Arta populară bucovineană* (*The Folk Art of Bucovina*), p. 293.

The fringed *opreg*, also represented as clothing of some sculptured figurines dating from the Bronze Age, is spread in our country within an area in the north-west of Romania, limited by several valleys (Bistra Valley, Almăj Valley, Jiu Valley) and the Land of Haţeg.

The fringed *opreg* is also frequent in the costumes of the Romanians in Serbian Banat, its spreading area including also other zones in the south-east of Europe (inhabited by Albanians and groups of Macedo-Romanians).[3]

Another sub-variant of the *catrinţă* is the *şorţ* (apron), which is a developed *catrinţă*, made up of a single piece but more often of two or three pieces of woven *catrinţă* pieces, sewn together on the length. This fact has led to the generalization of the term *catrinţă* also for apron. The difference is that women wear the apron only in the front and a little pleated on the waist. It is widespread in Transylvania.

Another term for apron is *şurţ*, a piece of costume of western and central-European origin and of Saxon influence that has been adopted in the Romanian folk costume of Transylvania.[4]

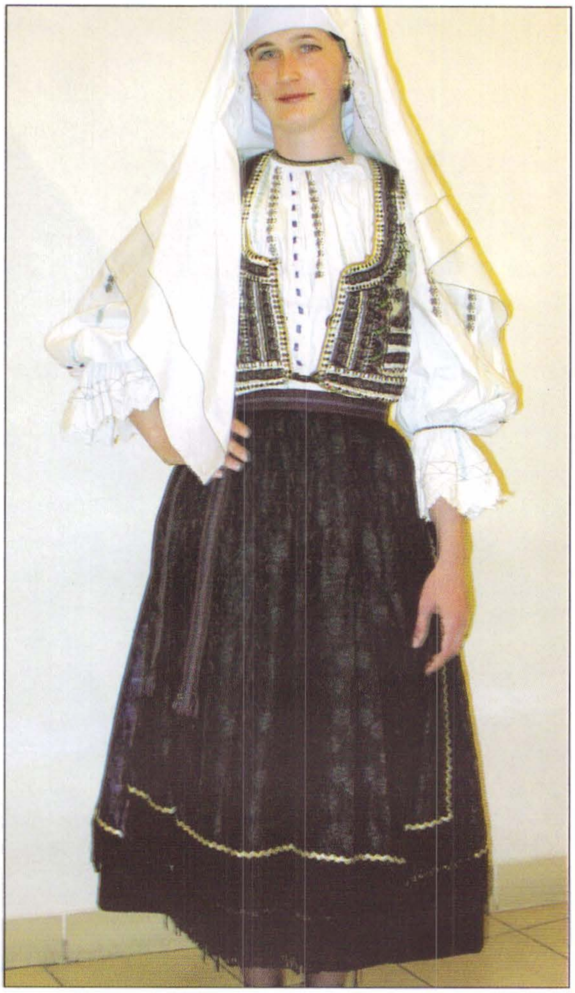
The apron has replaced the front *catrinţă* in many ethnographic zones of the country since the beginning of the 20th century. Initially, the apron was woven of vegetal fibres or wool and then women used industrial materials sold by merchants. The generalization of the apron in the folk costume all over the country has been achieved gradually, depending on the power of tradition, on the closer or more distant connection to towns, on the rapid spreading of industrial fabrics like silk, velvet and cloth.

The terms that name the apron differ from one ethnographic zone to another. Some examples are: *zadie*, *şurţ*, *pestelcă*, *cătrinţă* etc.

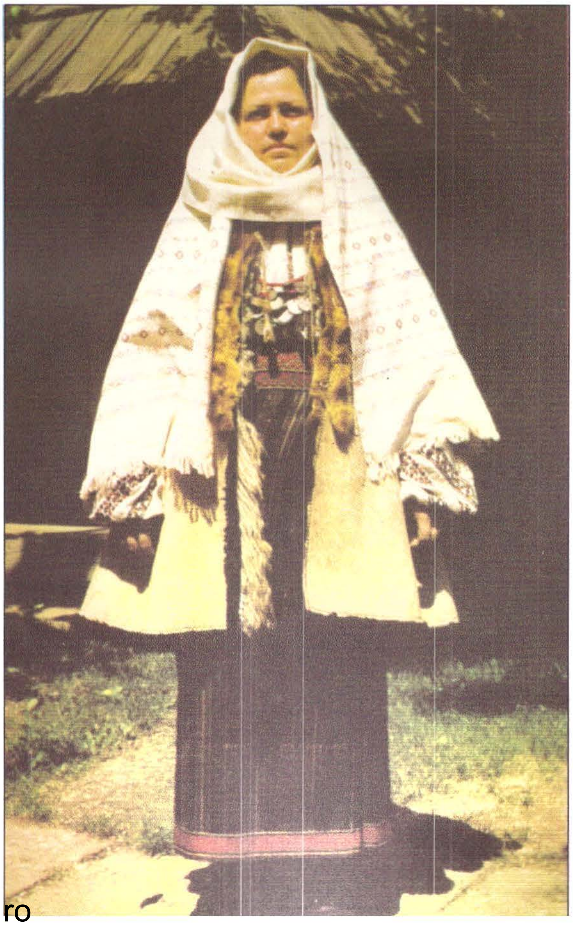
Another type of leg covering which is worn over the laps of the female long shirt is the *fotă*, a rectangular piece of hand-woven cloth, approximately 160 centimetres long and 80 centimetres wide. The *fotă* is tightly wrapped around the waist and its two margins are overlapped in the front and fixed on the waist with bands called *bete*.

The *fotă* is an archaic costume piece widely spread in the Mediterranean and Aegean-Asian cultures and taken over by the Arab culture, where the term *fotă* is also preserved. The *fotă* is represented on some metopes of the monument of Adamclisi in Dobrudja, in the south of Romania. These representations show two Dacian women wearing the *fotă*.

The circulation area of the *fotă* covers Moldavia, the north of Wallachia – up to the river Topolog, where the *fotă* and the *catrinţă* coexist – the upper course of the Mureş River Valley (Tulgheş-Topliţa) and the Bran area. The *fotă* is also spread in the north-east of Europe (in the Ukraine).



Apron (Braşov District)



*Costume with **fotă** (Suceava District)*

[3-4] Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România (Festive Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 61.

in the Middle East and in the south-east of Asia (India, Indonesia).[5]

The local-zonal terminology for the *fotă* differs from one zone to another. In Moldavia on both sides of the river Prut, the *fotă* is called *catrinţă*, although it refers to the piece that wraps the body tightly, from the waist down, on the length and not to the two separate rectangles (*tables*) that are worn in the front and in the back. Besides the term *catrinţă*, other local names such as *prigitoare* or *priştoare* refer to the *fotă* in the northern Moldavia. The *fotă* is known as *prinzătoare* on the Mureş Valley, *stricătoare* or more rarely *catrinţă* in the districts Buzău and Vrancea and *vâlnic* in some villages in Argeş district, according to the information collected by questionnaire for the *Romanian Ethnographic Atlas (AER)*.

The *fotă* has many ornamental variations that contribute to the definition of the the local-zonal type of costume. Initially it was woven in the technique of the four threads of fine woollen filaments (warp and filling) of natural colours or the warp was of fine woollen filaments (the best quality wool) and the filling was of wool, or the warp was of cotton and the filling was of wool. Later, the technique of weaving was with two threads and the fibres used were *strămătură* (fine wool, spun in the factories), *canva* (thin wool), cotton, thin cotton and silk. The background of the decorative field was black or more rarely violet, dark red, red or brown or alternating different colours like dark green, dark red etc. that give to the *fotă* its many ornamental variations and contribute to define the local-zonal type of costume.

From the morphological point of view, the *fotă* has two forms: the straight classical *fotă* and the pleated *fotă*. This costume piece is further classified according to the numbers of sheets that compose it. The *fotă* is made of a single piece of material in Moldavia and partially in a few zones of Wallachia, but composed of two pieces sewn together horizontally in zones like Argeş, Muscel, Dâmboviţa, Buzău, Râmnicu Sărat and Ilfov.

Another classification criterion for the *fotă* is given by the position of the decorative fields on its three parts: the ends (regionally named *foi* or *pulpane* (Vrancea), *feţe* (Rădăuţi), *pulpane* (Bran, Argeş, Prahova), the sides (*latu' din faţă*, *părţile* sau *poala* (Harghita) and the back (named *dos* in the whole country), which is always black and empty of ornamentation.

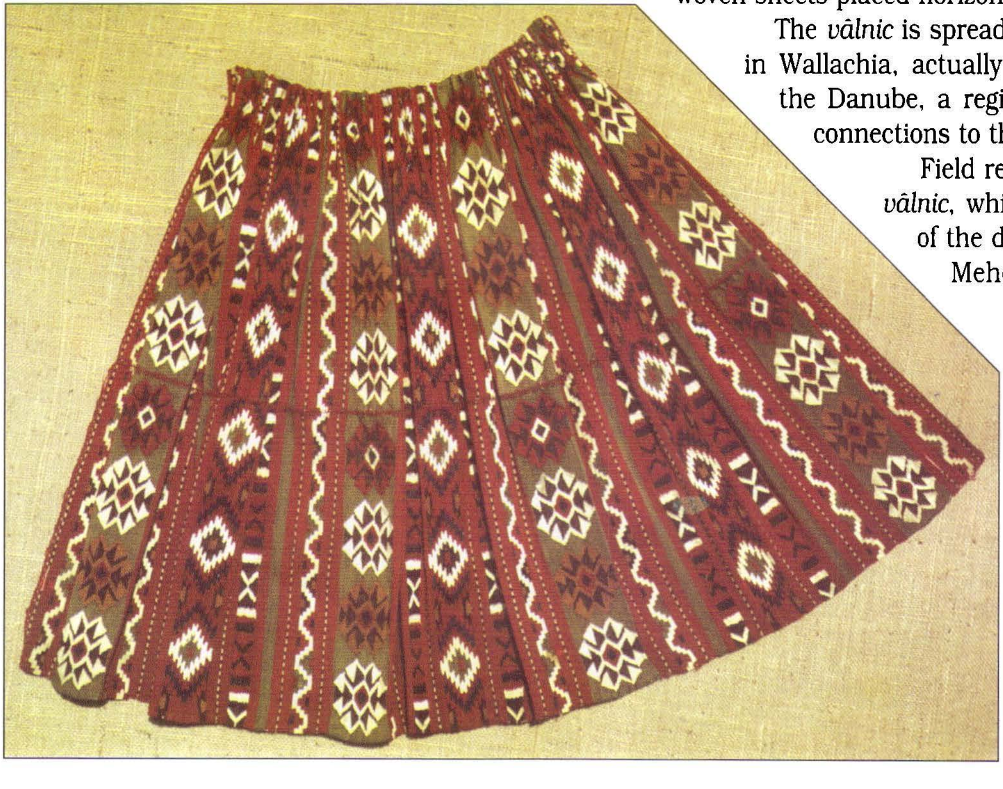
The *vâlnic*, a specific piece for the winter costume, is a big rectangular material up to 400 centimetres long and 80 centimetres wide and it is creased, folded or pleated, appearing as an unfinished skirt with its margins a little overlapped on one hip.

The local terminology of the *vâlnic* expresses its differing decorative variants: *opreg creţ* (pleated apron), *creţ* (pleat), *cătrinţă*, *zuvelcă*, *zăvelcă creaţă* (pleated *zăvelcă*), *zăvelcă mare* (big *zăvelcă*), *opreg*, *crăţană* etc.

The *vâlnic* is woven in the technique of the two threads. It is made of wool and has two long hand woven sheets placed horizontally.

The *vâlnic* is spread in Oltenia and partially in Wallachia, actually in the Wallachia along the Danube, a region that has had strong connections to the Balkans.

Field researches certify that the *vâlnic*, which is worn in the north of the districts Gorj, Vâlcea and Mehedinţi, originates from



Vâlnic (Dolj District)

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[5] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Arta populară bucovineană* (*The Folk Art of Bucovina*), pp. 298-299; Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*Festive Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 62.

the southern area and is part of the festive costume, because the old costume in the north of this region was composed of the two *catrinţe* which were worn in pair. That is how we explain the term *zăvelcă creaţă* used for *vâlnic* in the northern Oltenia: initially, the inhabitants of this region were not familiarized with the term *vâlnic.*

The *vâlnic* is also found at other peoples (Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians), in an area of old Thracian cultural inheritance which is spread on both sides of the Danube.[6]

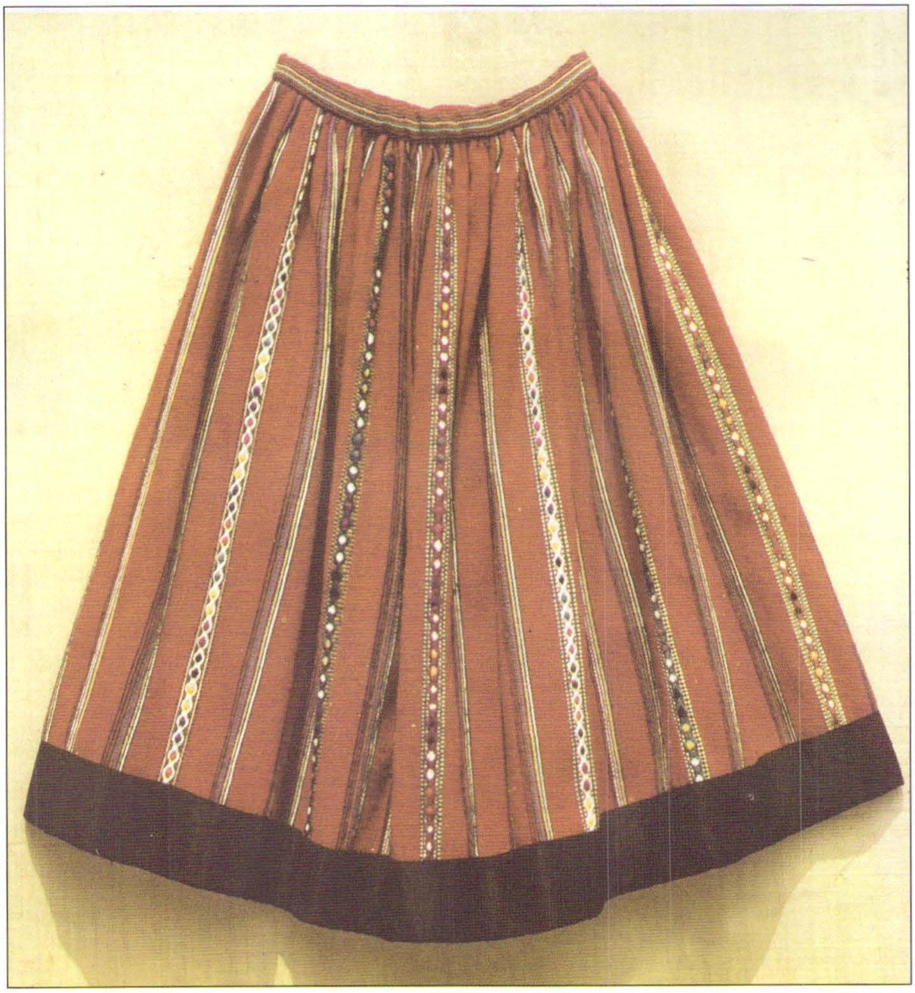
The two pieces, the *catrinţă* and the *fotă*, with their numerous ornamental-zonal variants, are the primordial, archaic elements of the traditional costume that confer different appearance to the female figure, stressing the curves of the hips uncovered by *catrinţe* or wrapping the hips tightly with the elegant *fotă.*

The third piece, the *vâlnic* – considered by the specialists as a developed form of the pleated *fotă*[7] – underlines the slim waist of the women, its amplitude reminding us of the Neolithic goddesses represented in their bell-shaped dresses.

While the function and the form of this defining pieces for the setting up of the typology of the women's folk costume have been preserved by the present day folk costume, their decoration has evolved from simple to complex compositions, following the improvement of the sewing and weaving techniques.

The skirt brought from the town is the only piece of the women's folk costume that alters the "canon" of the traditional clothing that would require only garments made up of rectangles of material which are not united by sewing. The skirt, known regionally as *rochie* (dress) *sumnă* or *sucnă* is composed of a few pieces of cloth that are sewn together and pleated around the waist and it has been integrated into the women's folk costume, being gradually adopted by peasant women all over the country.

Another type of skirt is the *androc*, spread on a smaller area (in the districts Bacău, Vrancea, Brăila, Tulcea, Constanţa, Buzău, Prahova, Dâmboviţa, Ilfov, Ialomiţa, Călăraşi, Braşov, Covasna) and worn especially at work.



Androc (Buzău District)

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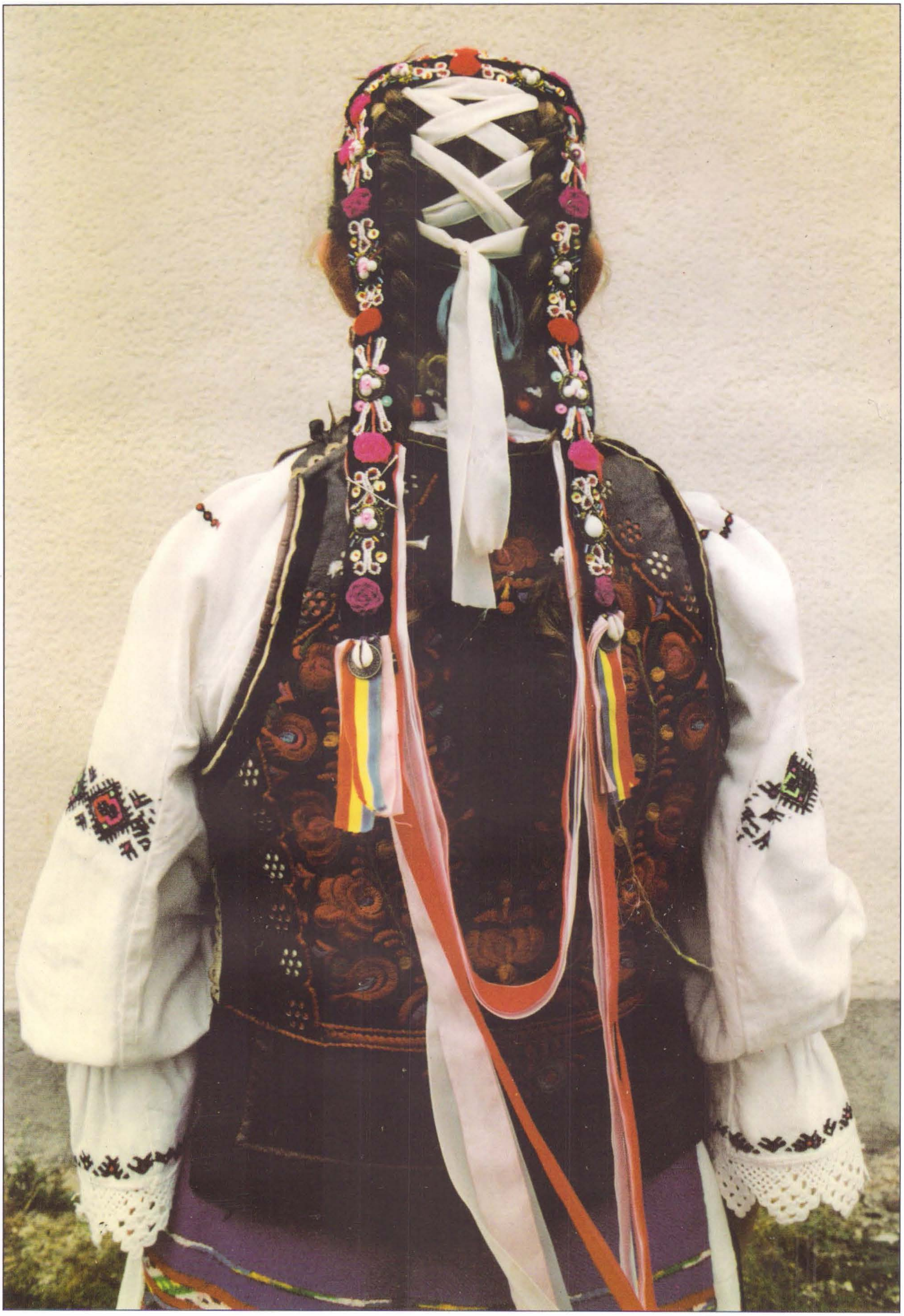
[6] Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România (Festive Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 64.

[7] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România (The Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 75.



The component pieces of the women's traditional costume

The Headdress

As part of the costume, the headdress includes old traditional elements that are transmitted from one generation to another and contribute – along the other constitutive pieces of the folk costume – to the contour of the specifically zonal particular features and to the defining of the typology of the local folk costume.

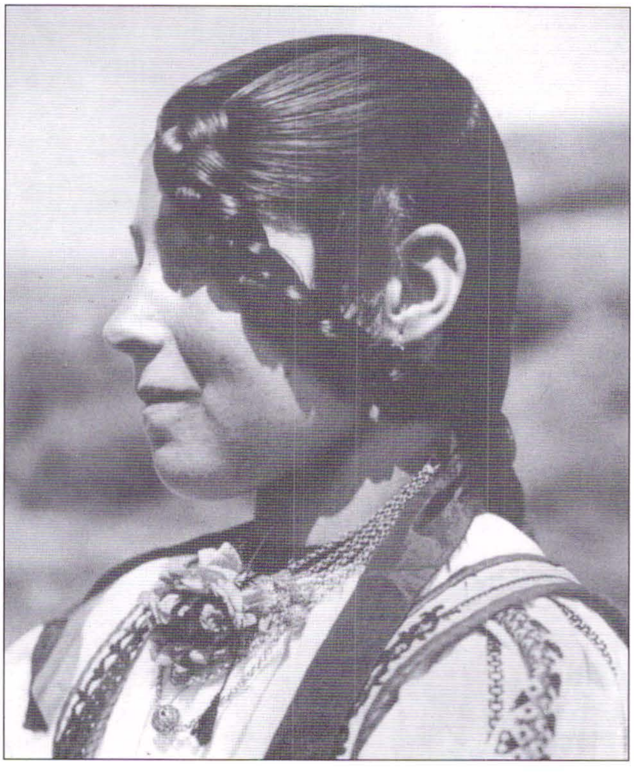
According to the folk rural mentality, the headdress, having as main components the hairdo, the different textile pieces that protect the head and the ornaments and accessories used to fix them on the head, constitutes a strong distinctive mark that indicates the belonging to a certain community, the context (festive or not), the age, the civil, material and social status of the person who wears it.

← *Girl hairdo (Năsăud Zone)*

Each ethnographic zone of the country is characterized by specific headdresses and hairdos. Textile pieces and their fixing techniques are widely varied.[1]

Integrated organically into the complex of the folk costume, the headdress is of great artistic interest and also of a real historical and documentary value. A look into the evolution of headdresses and of the folk costume as such reveals the social and economic life, the aesthetic taste of a certain epoch, the interferences and irradiations of elements belonging to different cultural areas (closer or more remote), which have been adopted and modified in the singular manner of the native creative genius.

An attentive analysis of the material collected during the researches for the project of the *Romanian Ethnographic Atlas* reveals the numerous modalities of braiding the hair – beginning from the middle parting of the hair above the forehead or from above the ear or from the nape of the neck. Traditionally, women can



Girl wearing a ***chică/cioc*** *(Apuseni Mountains)*

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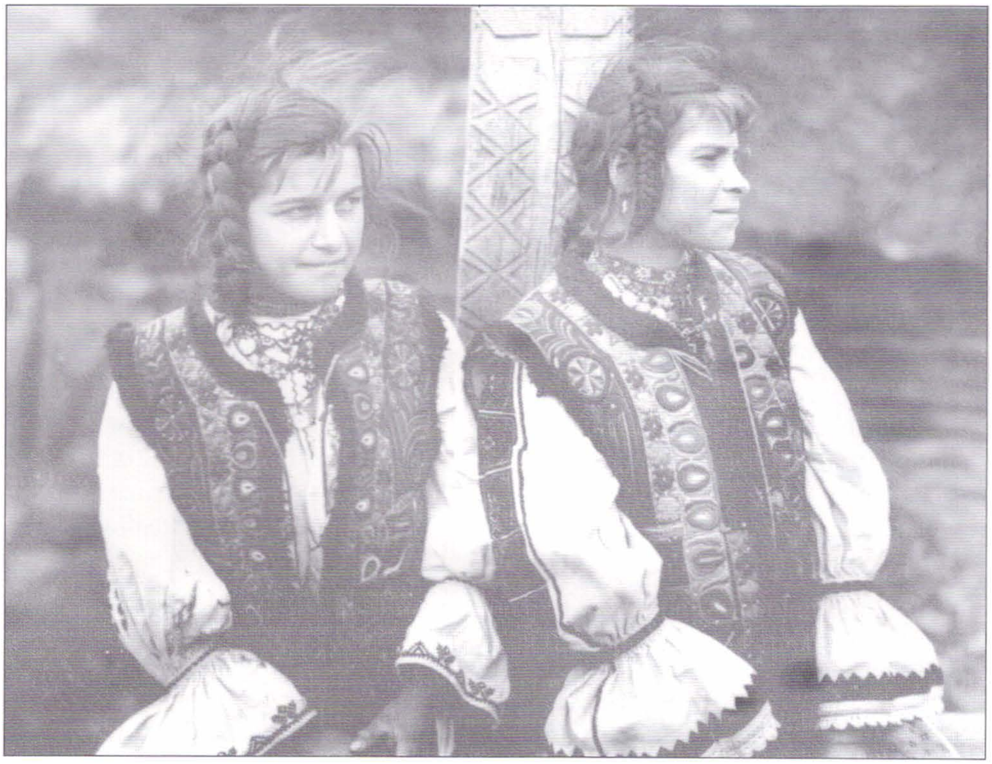
[1] I indicate a special selective bibliography: Romulus Vuia, *Portul popular din Ţara Haţegului (Folk Costume in the Land of Haţeg)*, Bucharest, 1926; Lucia Apolzan, *Portul şi industria casnică textilă din Munţii Apuseni (Costume and Textile Household Industry in the Apuseni Mountains)*, Bucharest, 1944; Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Portul popular din Ţara Oaşului (Folk Costume in the Land of Oaş)*, Bucharest, 1955; Cornel Irimie, *Portul popular din Ţara Oltului, zona Avrig (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Avrig Zone)*, Bucharest, 1957; Gheorghe Focşa, *Evoluţia portului popular din zona Jiului de Sus (The Evolution of Folk Clothing from the Zone of the Upper Jiu)*, 1957; Nicolae Dunăre, *Portul popular din Bihor (The Folk Costume of Bihor)*, 1957; Nicolae Dunăre, Marcela Focşa, *Portul buciumanilor din Munţii Apuseni (Costume of the* buciumani *from the Apuseni Mountains)*, 1957; Cornel Irimie, *Portul popular din Ţara Oltului. Zona Perşanilor. (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Perşani Zone)*, 1958; Cornel Irimie, *Portul popular din Ţara Oltului. Zona Branului (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Bran Zone)*, Bucharest, 1960; Cornel Irimie, *Portul popular din Ţara Oltului. Zona Făgăraş (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Făgăraş Zone)*, 1965; Nicolae Dunăre, *Portul popular din Ţara Zărandului (The Folk Costume in the Land of Zărand)*, Cluj, 1966; Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Portul popular din regiunea Maramureş. Zonele Oaş, Maramureş, Lăpuş (The Folk Costume in the Maramureş Region. Zones Oaş, Maramureş, Lăpuş)*, 1966; Nicolae Dunăre, *Portul popular de pe Târnave (The Folk Costume on the Târnave Valley)*, 1968; Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România (The Folk Costume in Romania)*, Bucharest, 1974; Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Arta populară bucovineană (The Folk Art of Bucovina)*, Bucharest, 1975.



Girls wearing their hair with a ***chică*** *(Haţeg County)*

wear their hair also in many ways: cut over the eyebrows, flowing down freely on their back, twisted at the back, on the crown of the head or around the ears.

Specific variants of hairdoes and headdresses are proper for each age category (little girls, girls, housewives and old women), corresponding to the four stages of life (childhood, teenager period, maturity and old age) and taking into account the practical norms settled by tradition and the aesthetic taste of the costume wearers in one area or another.

The hairdo of the first age group, including girls up to 14 or 15 years old, is achieved by different braiding techniques that vary from one zone to another.

The manner of "spinning" the hair beginning from the parting at the middle of the head and ending above the ear, where the real plait begins, is specific to this first age category.

Young girls frequently would wear their hair cut short on the forehead and with one or two plaits falling down their back or crowning their head.

Usually, the ends of the plaits are tied with thread or woollen filaments of different colours or with multicoloured ribbons that would hang down or would be bow-tied.

An old hairdo spread only in the area limited by the zone Pădurenii Hunedoarei, the Apuseni Mountains[2], in the north of Moldavia and in the district of Bihor is known as *cioc* (beck) or *chică*: the girl's hair would be parted horizontally, from one ear to the other and the upper part would be braided in a plait that would cross the forehead and after going down around the lower margin of the right ear would be united with the other half of the hair in a pony tail hanging down on the back and adorned with coloured ribbons.

The terms referring to the plaits are extremely varied and sometimes co-exist in the same area: *chici, cosiţe, plete, moaţe, cojnicioare* etc.

The plait of the hair on the crown of the head is called *moţ* (forelock, mop of hair) in many regions, the term being sometimes extended to the whole hairdo, as the *AER* questionnaires register for the districts Caraş-Severin, Mehedinţi, Dolj, Teleorman, Buzău, and Argeş. A girl would go to her first round dance for the first time at 14 or 15, an age that would mark her integration into a different category and social status. She would become a maid and would start to wear a specific costume. The hairdo would be especially important for teenagers on holidays, when a maid would always walk bareheaded, showing off the natural ornament of her hair arranged as attractively as possible.

A girl's plaits could hang down her back, unite at the nape of the neck, be raised as a crown around her head, circle her ears, be twisted in a loop etc., creating as many variants that would contribute – besides the costume – to contour the particular features of the costume in a certain zone.

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[2] Lucia Apolzan, *Portul şi industria casnică textilă... (Costume and Textile Household Industry...)*, p. 99.

A girl would most frequently do her hair with a plait or two hanging down on her back, tied with many coloured ribbons on holidays. The ribbons would fix the two plaits together, hanging down to the waist or they would be braided in the hair and tied with knot at the ends of the plaits, hanging freely or in a bow. According to field materials, the terms that name these special ribbons vary from one zone to another: *plântică, petea, primă, primură* or *primbură, ţop, cordeluţă* or *pleteancă* etc.

During the summer, a girl would adorn her plaits with natural flowers besides ribbons: geraniums, carnations, gillyflowers, basil, marjoram, roses or other garden flowers. During the winter, she would use artificial flowers as well as a series of ornaments such as beads, bone-needles, pins with coloured nails, bone hairpins with coloured stones or hair combs made of bone and aluminium.

Even in the cases when a girl's hairdo and a maid's hairdo are the same, there are specific marks and aesthetic elements that distinguish a girl's headdress from that of other age categories, as young girls would constitute a clearly separated group in the traditional rural community.

For example, the headdress on the forehead and on the two sides of the head could vary according to the status of girl or maid attributed to the young woman. The hair could be arranged in different shapes: *colţi* (small triangles, also named *obloane – shutters* in the Satu Mare district, *zgarlaonţi* in the Teleorman district, *inele – rings* in the Sibiu district, *cupe-goblets* in the Caraş-Severin district, *colţi* in the districts Arad and Prahova); *zulufi în părţi – side locks* in the Covasna district; *curls* (*onduleuri*) made with tongs and named *pale* or *valuri* (*waves*) in the districts Ilfov, Argeş, Mehedinţi, Covasna; thin braided plaits that were then unbraided, leaving the hair curled; the wet hair twisted by a needle or nail (the Caraş-Severin district); locks on the forehead (districts Botoşani, Covasna, Timiş).

As field researches reveal, the girls would wear their hair in a plait that was unbraided at the top and tied with a ribbon, hanging down on the back or arranged as a bow in the districts Suceava, Teleorman, Prahova, Argeş, Hunedoara, and Alba.

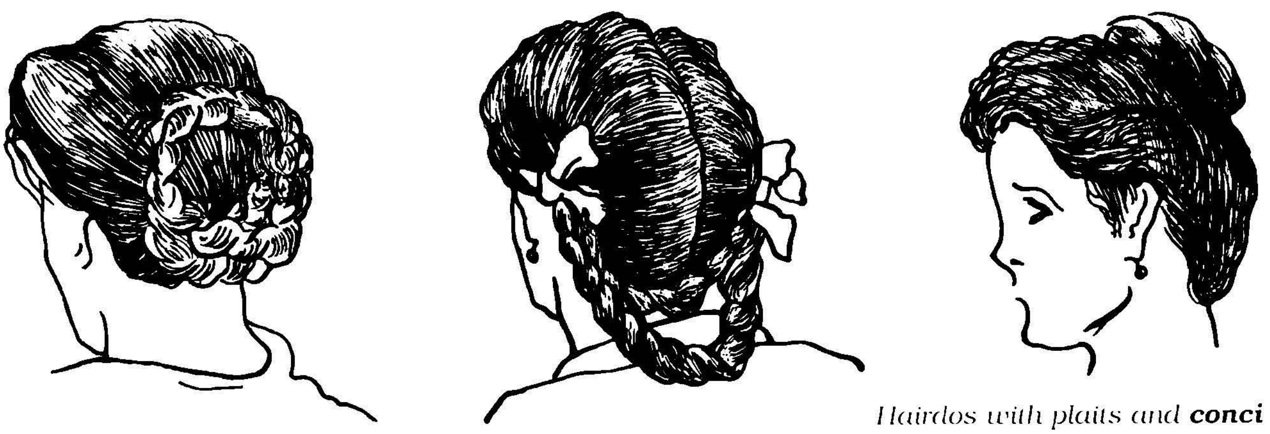
In other areas (districts Cluj, Sălaj, Arad, Caraş-Severin, Timiş, Suceava), the girls would braid all their hair in a *tablă-table* (the Timiş district) or in a *coadă din lat-wide plait* (the Cluj district), that was made by up to 40 strands.

In case their hair was not very thick, girls would thicken it by using wool dyed in the colour of the hair or their natural hairs lost after combing. These additions had different names: *nadă* in the Buzău district or *pleteri* in the districts Dolj and Mehedinţi.

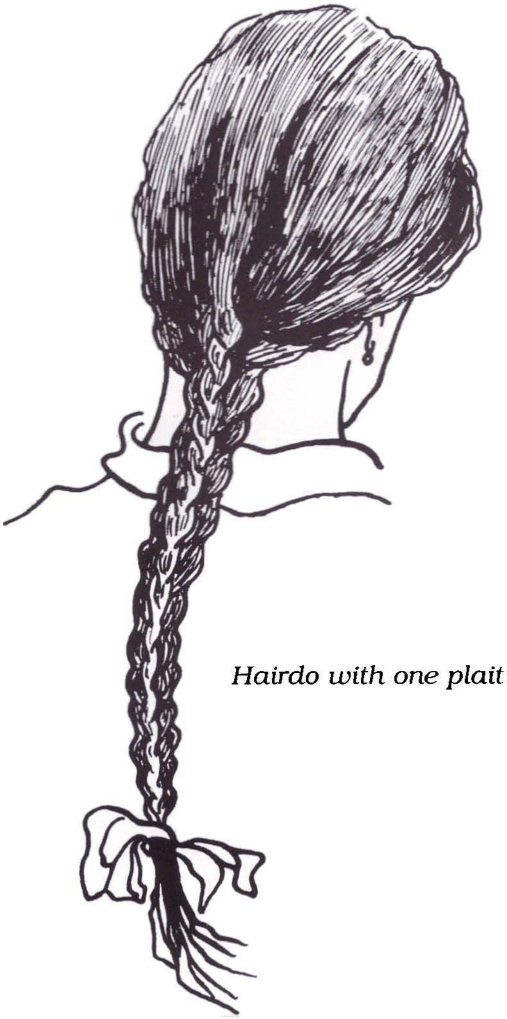
A frequent hairdo of the young girls would be the loop (bun), made by twisting the hair or braiding it in one, two or more plaits. There is also a very rich terminology for this loop: *conci, cucui, cuc, moţ, colac, moţoc, coşercuţă, conc, pup* etc. The loop would be fixed with iron hair pins called *spelci, crăcane, căngi, ghemţari, arnoage, arnoale, zulufare, igle, hoite, acealniţe* etc.

The hairdo with two plaits arranged as a crown around the head has been widely spread all over the country, with a few variants: the plaits would be braided beginning with the hair above the ears and brought to the crown of the head; the plaits would be braided beginning to the hair on the nape of the neck and brought to the crown of the head; or the plaits would begin from above the ears, being then brought to the crown of the head and drawn to the nape of the neck.

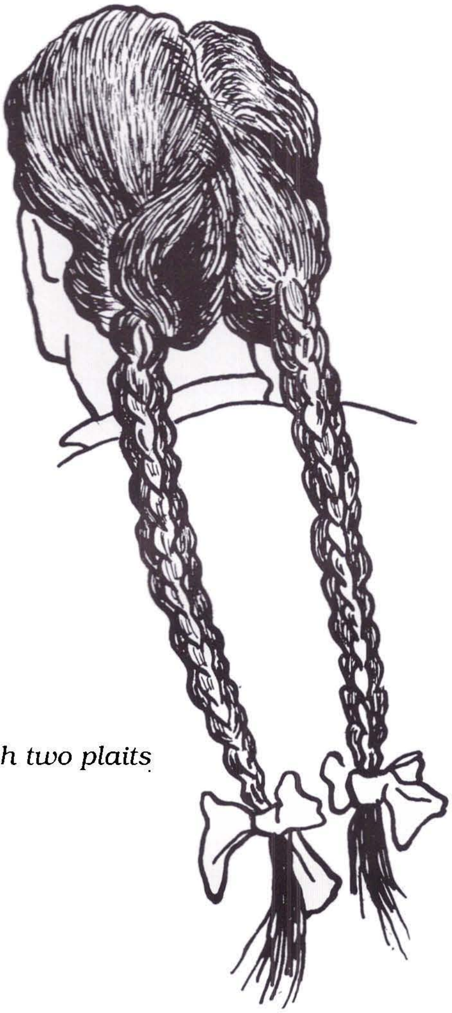
On holidays or on the two or three Sundays previous to the wedding in some ethnographic zones, the hairdo would be completed with little crowns made of natural or artificial flowers or with complicated "dressing" made of ribbons, beads, little mirrors, multicoloured woollen tassels, peacock feathers or coins, all these adornments constituting the distinctive signs of the maids within the traditional rural communities.



Hairdos with plaits and ***conci***



Hairdo with one plait



Hairdo with two plaits

The passage from the status of maid to that of wife would be marked the second day after the wedding, when the ritual known as *the covering of the bride* would be performed. During this ritual, the hairdo of the young woman would be changed and a *conci* (a headdress support) would be set on her head. She would be obliged to wear the *conci* all her life, as the *conci* and the headdress were in fact status emblems, showing that she was a married woman and asserting her social position in a symbolic way.

The *conci* is a support made of the most varied materials: branches of apple tree, lime tree, cherry tree, sycamore maple, rose, tendril, rods, mace reed, corn stem, cardboard, cattle horn, tin, wire, bone, cloth, rough homespun, wool, natural hair etc. It has different dimensions and highly varied shapes: circular, semicircular, oval, triangular, horn-like, conic section, V-shaped etc. Wrapped in cloth or in wool, these supports would be placed over the braided hair, being fixed on two plaits that were sewn, tied or twisted around the *conci*.

The supports – intermediary pieces between the hair and the textile pieces of the headdress – have been widely spread in Oltenia, Wallachia and Dobrudja and quite uncommon in Moldavia. A married woman would be obliged to wear them, as they had the function of keeping the hair in order and giving shape to the hairdo and at the same time of fixing and supporting the headdresses, as the wife would observe the ancient traditional rule of keeping her hair out of the public eye forever after marriage.

There is a strong interdependence between the hairdo with the hair parted at the middle of the head and a loop made of plaits that intertwine at the nape of the neck and are tied with thread in a long or round loop (usually called *conci* and raised on the crown of the head) and the support also named *conci*.[3]

Sometimes, hairdos would be fixed by using supports with special shapes. An example is the archaic hairdo "with horns", looking like lateral prominences made of the plaits twisted above the ears and sometimes fixed by a horn-shaped wire support placed over the plaits or by annex pieces of this form, like the well-known *ceapsă cu coarne* in the Land of Haţeg.

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[3] Jana Negoiţă, *Conci, ciupag, opreg...*, p. 57.

The hairdo "with horns", that the *AER* questionnaires mention just in the districts Sălaj, Hunedoara, Alba, Suceava, Teleorman, and Vrancea was spread on a much larger area in the past.[4]

Even if the natural hair of a woman was thick enough, the traditional norms transmitted from one generation to another required thickening it with artificial hair named *pletenci, sclebe, pleteri* etc. The plaits, thickened like that and strengthened by woolen filaments called *curmi* in the villages around the town of Caransebeş, *dârlogi* (*reins*) in the region Almăj, *cioci* in the Alba district or *cosiţe* in the districts Cluj, Alba, and Hunedoara, were brought in front of the ears in a kind of semicircle and then turned back to the nape of the neck. The two plaits, overlapped and tied one to another, were visible under the margin of the headdress.

Another hairdo, frequent in the districts Bistriţa-Năsăud, Sibiu, and Alba, and quite rare in many zones of the country, was the one with the plaits turned as a wheel around the head and thickened with woollen strands, perfectly covered by the natural hair strands.

The hairdos of the married women were more complicated than those of women belonging to other age categories and sometimes they could reflect older fertility rites, underlining, along the pieces of the costume, the particularities of a certain ethnographic zone.

According to the mentality in village communities, a woman in her fourties enters another stage of life, that of the old age.

Almost identical to the hairdo of the young married women, the hairdo of the old women is more sober, some coquetry elements specific for young wives, like the cut hair on the forehead, the locks or the *colţi*, being abandoned at an older age.

As the whole costume, the headdress of elderly women clearly marked their age category by rigid conservatorism and the preservation of archaic elements as well as by some ornamental and chromatic details (a more discreet background composed of dark shades of colour).

The most widespread hairdos for old women were the one with plaits that intertwined at the nape of the neck, called the hairdo with *cosiţe* (plaits) in the Ilfov district and with *berci* in the Ilfov, Teleorman, and Argeş districts; a second hairdo with a loop made of natural hair or with supports wrapped in cloth or wool; an a third hairdo with plaits that crowned the head.

Among other archaic hairdos, we mention the one named *cioci* (common in the Alba district), with strands of hair thickened by wool and braided beginning at the nape of the neck and then turned over the ears and raised on the crown of the head to form a prominent crest; the one *with horns*, spread in the districts Hunedoara, Alba, Suceava, Vrancea, Teleorman and the one *with plaits*, made of two braided strands of hair, beginning from below the ears. The plaits were thickened by spun wool and turned around the ears, intertwining then at the nape of the neck (this hairdo was frequent in the districts Cluj, Alba, and Hunedoara).

Along time, besides the other elements that compose the traditional costume, the hairdos have gone through a continuous evolution, suffering permanent transformations and adjustments. The traditional archaic forms inherited especially by old women and maintained up to the First World War have gradually been replaced by newer, more simple and comfortable forms that have proved to be more appropriate for the new life requirements.

The Headdress

A hairdo is completed by a series of textile pieces and ornaments that make intrinsic part of the headdress, integrating it stylistically in the harmony of the whole costume.

The women in each ethnographic zone of the country have their characteristic way of covering their head (*îmbrobodire*) and although some traditional rules are observed as far as the veiling technique is concerned. The *head covers* are highly aesthetic and ingenious in point of shape, dimension, craft, decorative and chromatic composition and technique of assembling the pieces.

Although the head covers initially had a practical function of protecting the women against unfavourable weather conditions, in time they have acquired an artistic and ornamental role. Besides all these functions, the headdresses have always been a social mark of the civil status of their bearers.

During the wedding ceremonial, the veils would fulfill a ritual and symbolic function that has been preserved in some regions of the country up to our days.

By reading the different elements of the headdresses (material, decorative and chromatic structures, wrapping techniques), an insider of the community could indicate the age, civil status, and material and social condition of a woman who wore a certain type of head cover, adapted in form and structure to the geographic environment and the occasion of wearing.

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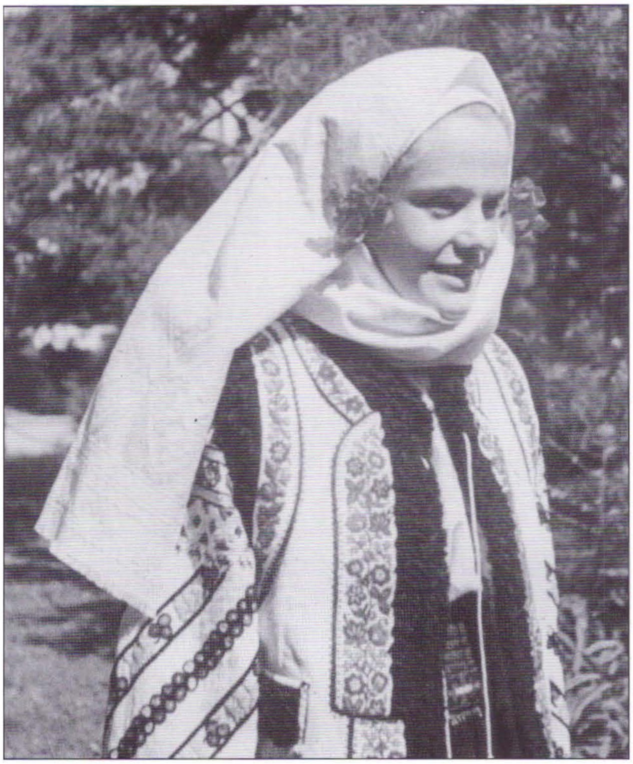
[4] Ion Chelcea, *Portul cu coarne* (*The Headdress with Horns*), p. 107; Georgeta Stoica; Maria Vâgâi, *Arta populară din Câmpia Munteniei* (*Folk Art in the Plain of Wallachia*), p. 64.



Head dressing by ***ştergar*** *in Bucovina and Bessarabia (next page)*

Two stages appear obvious in the practice of head covering: the stage of supporting the hairdo by using secondary, annex pieces with a functional role and various zonal forms and names: *legătoare* (tying device), *tulpan*, *fes* (fez), *mecheleţ*, *ceapsă*, *căiţă* etc.; and the stage of proper covering of the head, over the hairdo, by a textile piece as the *ştergar*, *maramă*, *basma* (head kerchief) etc.

Some elements play an intermediary role between a hairdo and a head cover in some regions (*căiţă*, *ceapsă*) and the same elements have the role of proper head covers in some other regions.

Among the head covers which are arranged in a free manner each time they are used[5] we mention the *ştergar*, the *maramă* (a variant of *ştergar*), the *basma* (head kerchief) and the triangular *tulpan* (a variant of the head kerchief).

The *ştergar* represents the most simple head cover and constitutes the basis of all the systems of covering the heads of the women who wear folk costumes in Romania.

The *ştergar* was initially woven of hemp and flax fibers but when cotton has got into use in the peasant households (with its different qualities: *bumbăcel*, *aţă*, *sacâz*, *inişor*, *coton*, *izmir* etc), it has replaced the former less refined materials, being widespread all over Wallachia, Oltenia, Moldavia, partially in Transylvania and in isolated spots in Banat and Dobrudja.

The morphological aspect of the *ştergar* is rectangular and is common to all the areas where this head cover is worn. However, the dimensions, the technique of weaving, the decorative structure, the type of covering and associating the *ştergar* with other pieces differ from one zone to another, creating a great number of variants.

The terminology concerning the *ştergar* is remarkably rich and sometimes several terms coexist in the same zone: *peşchir*, *pânzătură*, *miniştergură*, *zăbranic*, *zăbrelnic*, *năframă*, *proboadă*, *tindeu*, *căpătâi*, *cârpă lungă*, *cârpă*, *felegă* etc.

Initially, the compositional system specific to the *ştergar* was simple, consisting just of linear ornaments, parallel streaks along the width of the piece, perpendicular on the orientation of the warp thread. The *body* of the *ştergar* stays empty of ornament at older pieces in the districts Argeş, Mehedinţi, Gorj etc. and the decorative range is concentrated at the two ends of the *ştergar* where simple streaks or groups of streaks appear, the filling of the cloth being thicker than the warp in order to reveal the pattern. A perfect equilibrium would be acquired between the decorated and undecorated spaces and the purity of the simple piece of cloth revealed remarkable attributes of artistic expression.

In time, the ornamentation of the *ştergar* has evolved and the rhythmic succession of streaks has been enriched on the margins of the piece by intercalated *ajur* (needle-made lace) and *alesături* (woven patterns) with stylized geometrical, bird-shaped, symbolic, skeomorphic and vegetal motives. In the zones Olt, Argeş and Muscel, the woven patterns were sometimes replaced by patterns sewn with wool of different colours.

As different from the *ştergare* in the other zones of the country, woven only in the technique of the two threads, the Moldavian *ştergare* were woven in the technique of the 3, 5, 7, 9 and up to 15 threads, a technique that required a lot of skill and practice, which was why only a few women could weave such headdresses.

As compared to the rich ornamentation of the *ştergare* in Wallachia, the ornamentation of the Transylvanian *ştergar* was much poorer, being limited to a few thin stripes in sober tones or to rows of little decorative elements, sewn or woven.

The *ştergare* in Banat are made of the thinnest cotton thread and their decoration (consisting of geometrically stylized flowers placed on the width of the

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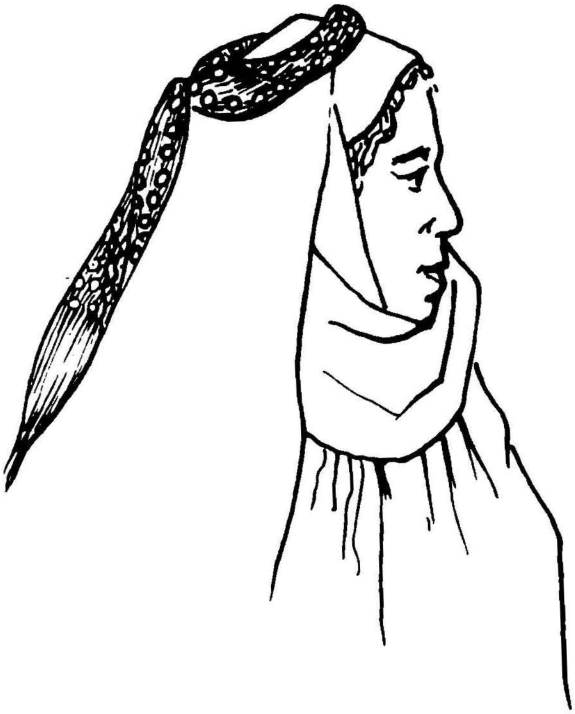
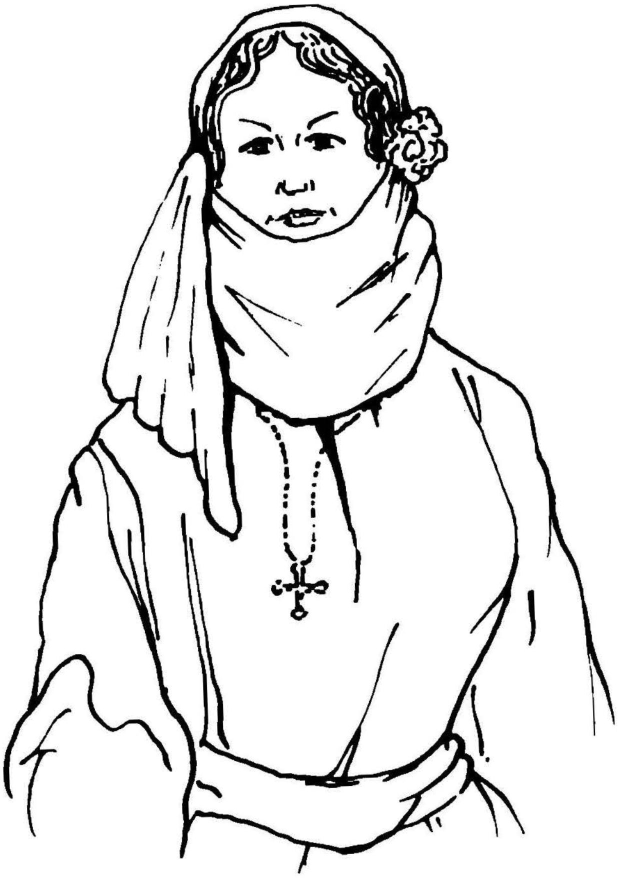
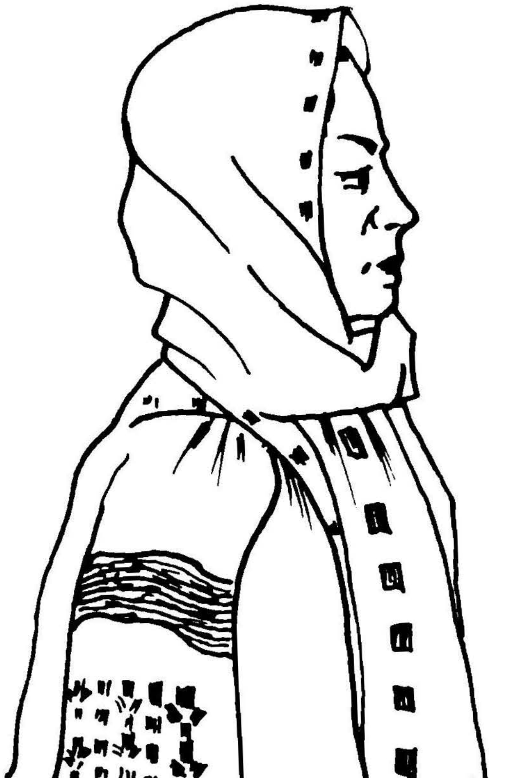
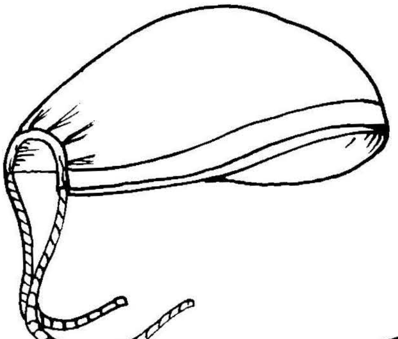
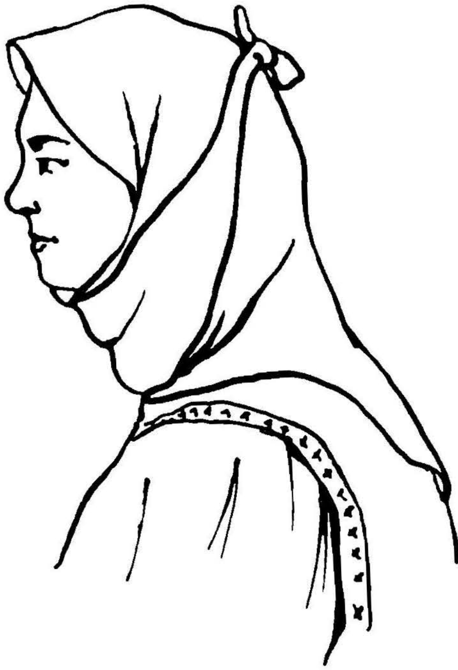
[5] We use the typology proposed by Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, in the study *Portul popular din România* (*The Romanian Folk Costume*).











material in parallel ranges) is concentrated at the two ends, in the technique *sewn on the thread*.

In some zones, the *ştergar* has been associated with other head pieces like the fez, the *căiţă*, the *ceapsă* or the head kerchief.

The *maramă* (a variant of the *ştergar*) has attained a highly refined technique and artistic level along with the introducing of the raw silk as material for tailoring folk costume pieces. The spreading area of the raw silk *maramă*, destined especially for holidays, comprised Oltenia, Wallachia, the south of Moldavia and the south of Transylvania, in all these regions the *maramă* and the *ştergar* coexisting.

The remarkable artistic value of the *maramă* is due mainly to its discreet ornamentation that combines different aspects of the background and the decorative pattern: a compact pattern on a transparent material, a multicoloured decoration on an ivory background or a shining metallic effect over a thin veil. Simple ornamental motives, interpreted as singular elements, repeated or in various combinations, have generated numerous decorative systems in the areas Bran, Buzău, Prahova, Vâlcea etc.

The geometrical or stylized-flower motives, woven with thicker threads of cotton, artificial silk or cotton were clearly outstanding against the transparent raw silk warp. The colour refinement was also obtained by using a subtle monochromatic range of colours in the same tone.

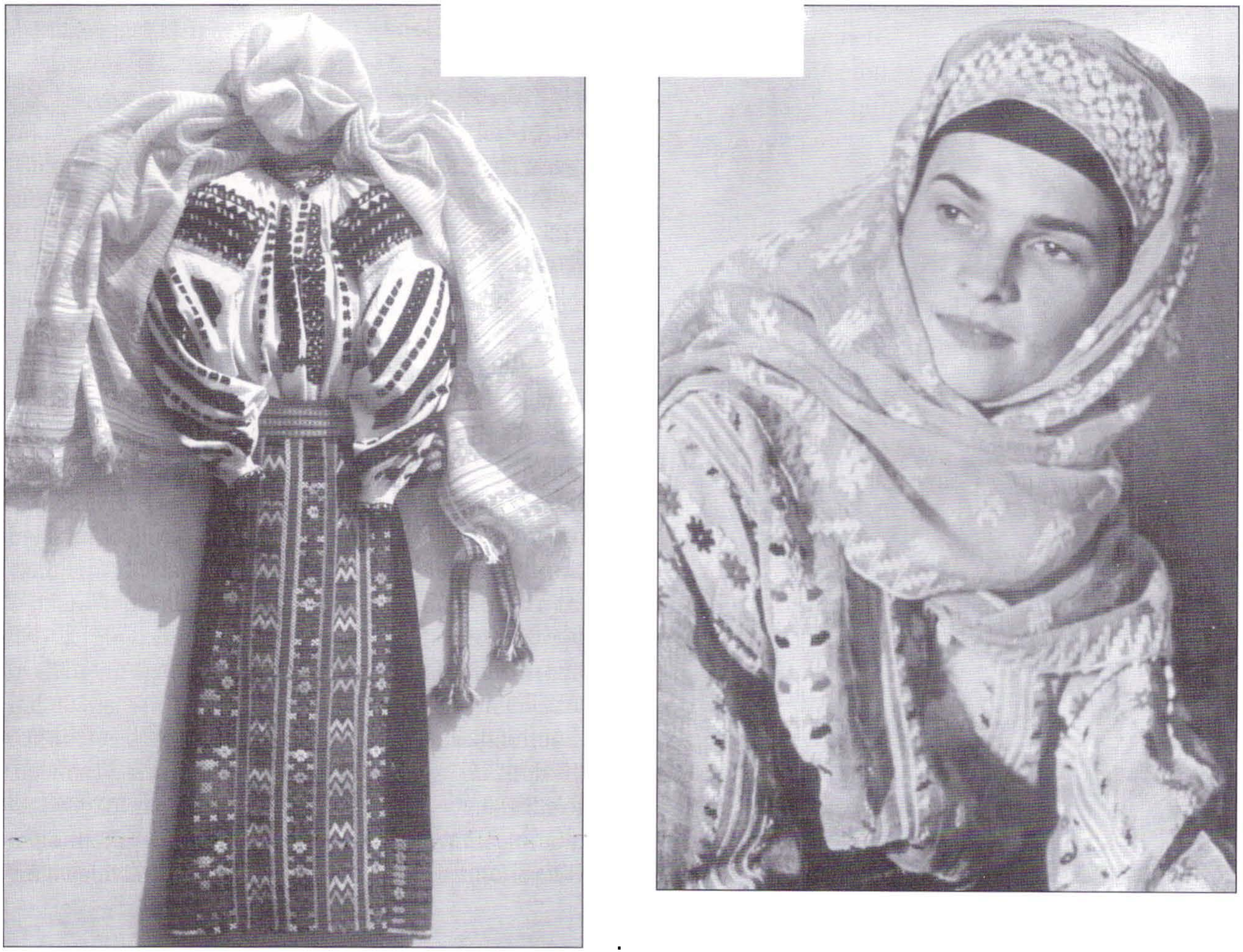
The head kerchief bought from the tradesmen replaced the *ştergar* and the *maramă* in some areas of Banat, Transylvania and Moldavia in the latter half of the 19th century, as a consequence of urban influence.

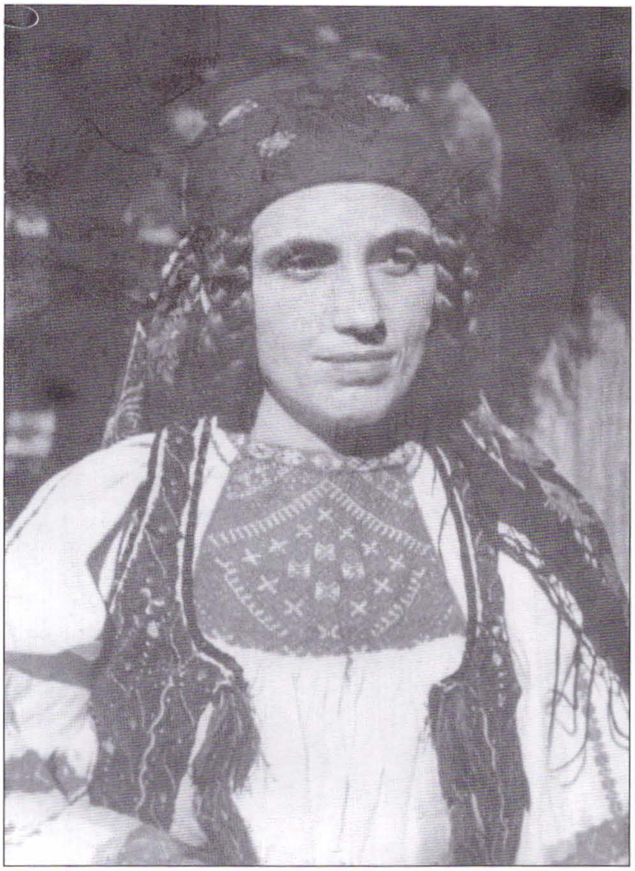
The head kerchief, also known as *năframă*, *chişchineu*, *dermea*, *testemel*, *bariş*, *bariz* etc., has gradually spread all over the country, being included in the Romanian folk costume as early as the end of the 19th century.

A square piece of textile material (cotton, cashmere, silk, woollen fabric, velvet etc.), the head kerchief has many variants, depending on its texture, dimensions and chromatics.

Like the *ştergar*, the head kerchief marks age and status differences, that can be decoded in the way of ornamentation (all over the surface or only as a frame; embroidered with multicoloured bouquets of flowers,

Costumes with ***maramă*** *specific for the districts Buzău (left) and Bacău (right)*





Head covering by head kerchief (the Apuseni Mountains)

sewn in one corner, in the four corners or all over the material), in the chromatic range and in the arrangement on the head.

Besides its practical-utilitarian function, the head kerchief also had a symbolic-ritual function during the rites of passage. For example, the head kerchief was used to purify the midwife and the godfather at the christening of a child. Emil Petrovici registered this custom in the zone of Almăj.[6]

During the wedding and funeral ceremonies in Banat and Moldavia the custom has been preserved to give away head kerchiefs of colours and ornaments adjusted to the occasion.

Damaschin Bojincă signals another ritual function of the head kerchief. At the moment when a young widow re-entered the round dance after a year of mourning, she had to lay a head kerchief (*năframă*) on the ground, so the dance would not begin directly on the ground in which the dead one was buried.[7]

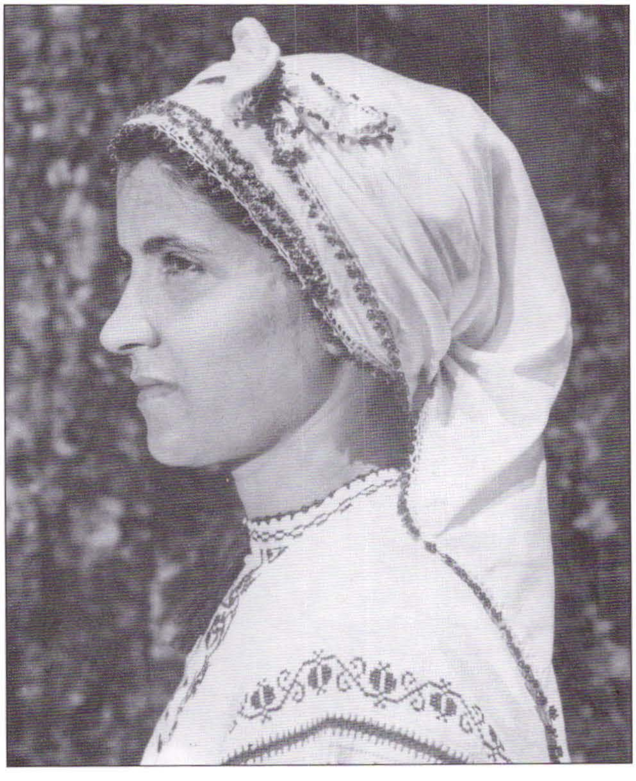
The *tulpan*, a triangular variant of the head kerchief, is a component piece of the folk costume in plain areas, widespread also in Dobrudja. The *tulpan* was formerly made of hemp or linen fabric, house-woven and dyed with vegetal substances or it was made of traded materials (*indian, marchizet, nansuc, madipolon, pânză de gheaţă* (ice fabric), *pânză înălbită* (whitened fabric), *pânză topită* (melt fabric), the so-called *pânză de Iaşi* (fabric of the town Iaşi) and women would wear it either as single head cover or under the *ştergar* or *maramă*, as an annex piece.

The holiday *tulpan* is known under different names in the areas where it is spread – *cornurar, colţ* (corner), *batistă* (handkerchief), *grimea, diurmea, cârpă* (cloth), *foiţă de cârpă* (little sheet of cloth) etc. – and it is ornamented all around with brightly coloured little beads, metallic pailletes, pierced embroidery woven with white thread (*şabac*), lace or little triangles made with the needle or with the crochet.

The *tulpan* has acquired a ceremonial role in some areas like the districts Mehedinţi and Olt, where it is the traditional mark of a young married woman.

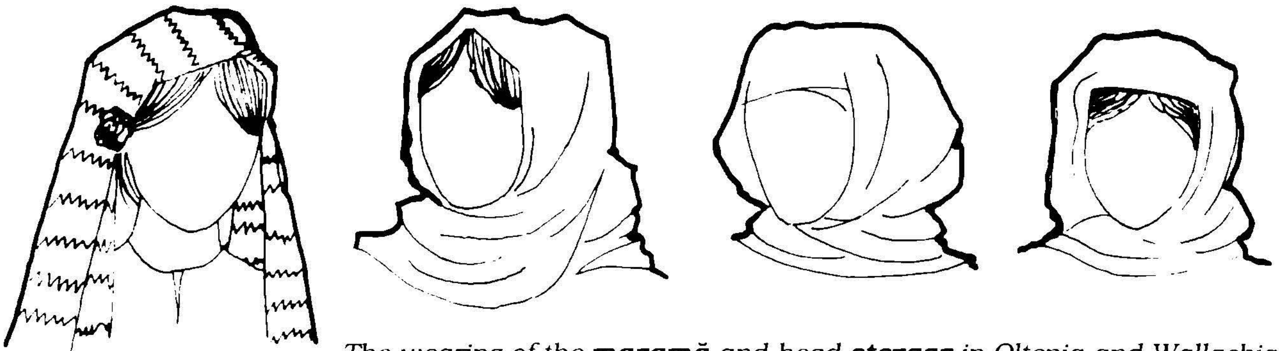
Another category of head covers contains fixed bonnet-like forms: the *ceapsă* and the *conci*.

The *ceapsă*, attested in 18th and 19th century documents, constituted the distinctive sign of civil status for married women. It was maintained in the traditional clothing of the mountainous areas of the Banat district, in the valley of Haţeg and in the Pădureni area of the Hunedoara district until after the First World War.

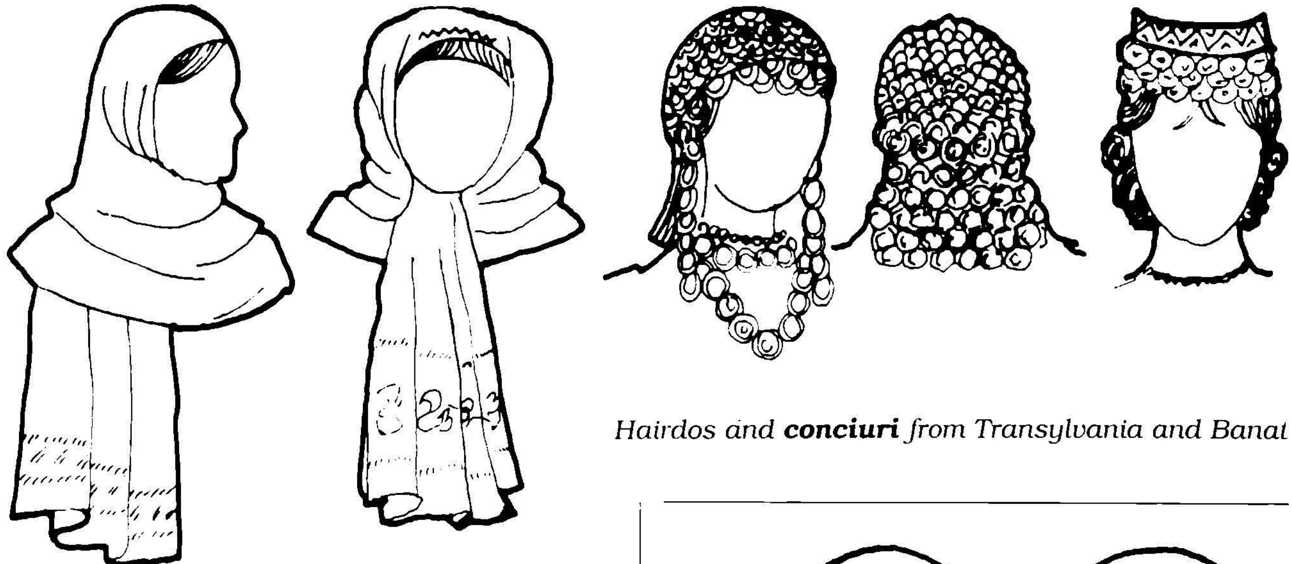


***Tulpan** (Dobrudja)*

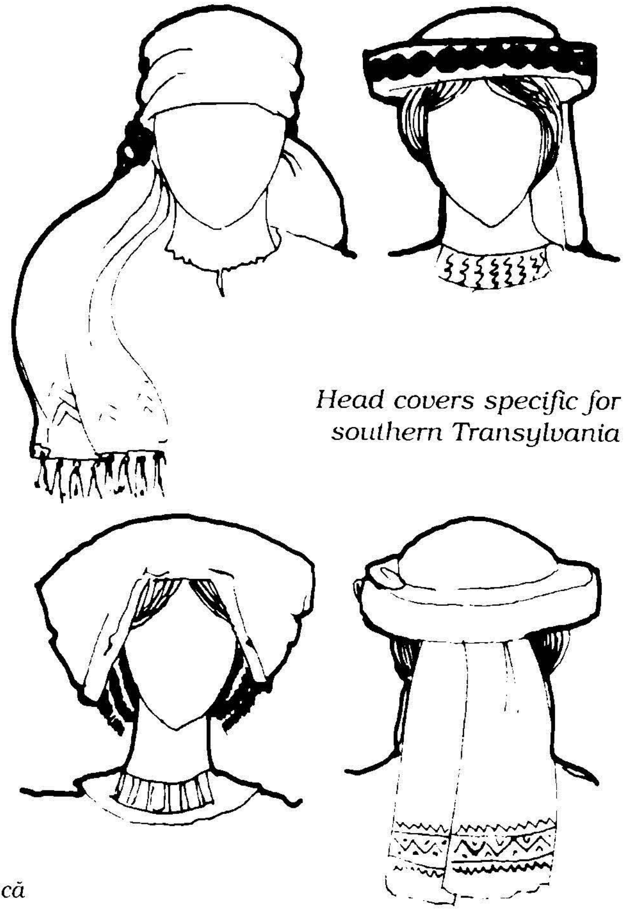
[6-7] *Apud* Aristida Turcuş, *Portul popular românesc în judeţul Timiş* (*The Romanian Folk Costume in the Timiş District*), p. 19.



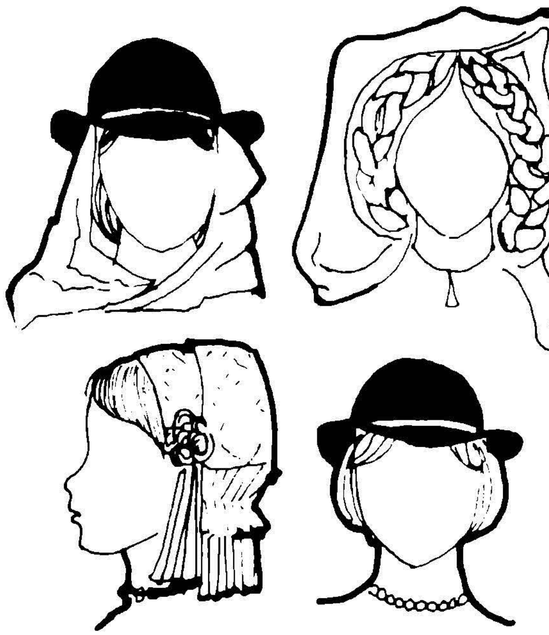
The wearing of the **maramă** and head **ştergar** in Oltenia and Wallachia



Hairdos and **conciuri** from Transylvania and Banat

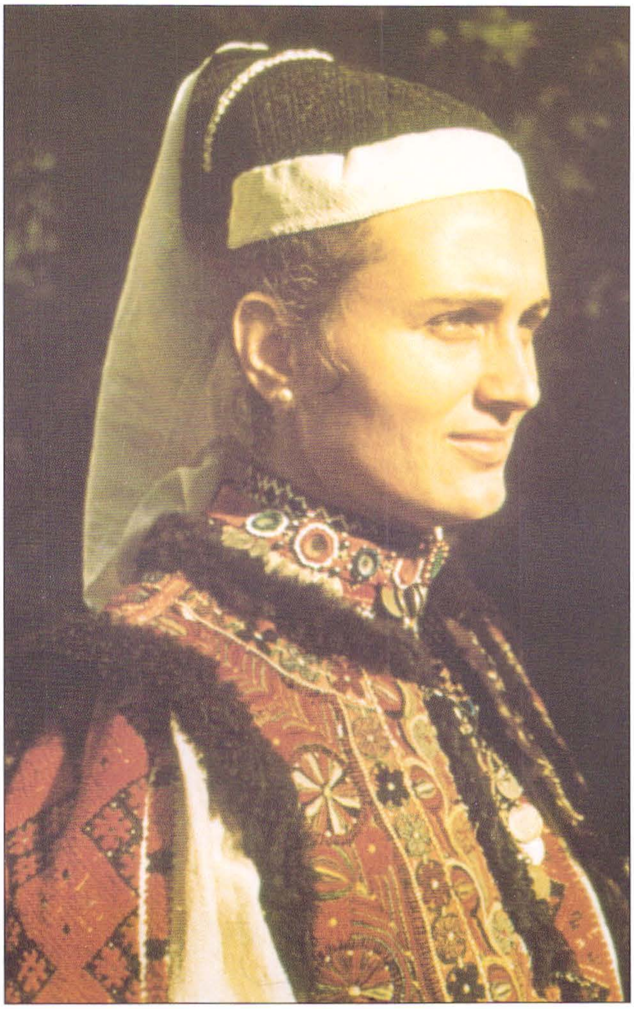


Head covers specific for southern Transylvania

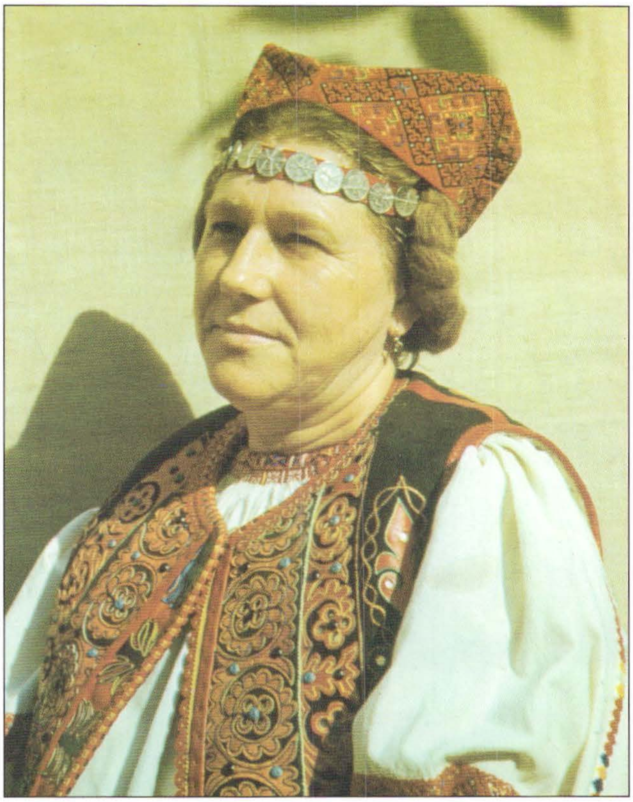


Hairdos, **conciuri** and hats (Transylvania-Banat)

Reprinted from P. Petrescu, G. Stoica, *Arta populară românească* (*The Romanian Folk Art*) Bucharest, 1981, pp. 106-107.



Ceapsă *of Pădureni*



Ceapsă *of Banat*

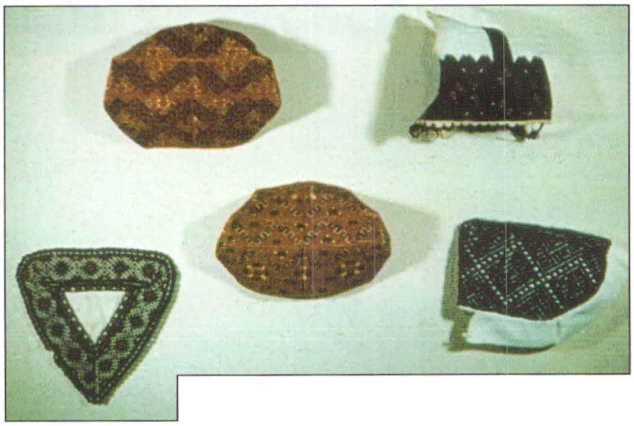
The component parts of the *ceapsă* were woven in the house, using hemp, flax, cotton and wool and they were ornamented by cotton, wool or silk threads, by metallic wire, beads, pailletes, cords and different decorative tassels.

There are a few local-zonal variants of *ceapsă*, according to their shape and cut: the triangular *ceapsă*, characteristic to the Bozovici-Almăj valley[8], which is woven of hemp in the technique of the two threads and ornamented by sewing and woven patterns, made of mercerized cotton and soft wool; the rectangular *ceapsă with obadă* (felly), spread in the Bistra valley and made of linen or cotton fabric, ornamented with the same lozenge-based geometrical motives as the triangular *ceapsă*; the pentagonal *ceapsă with obadă* (felly), present in the costume in the area western to the town Caransebeş, towards Reşiţa and Bocşa, and ornamented with embroidered lozenges; the *ceapsă with munună*, specific to the Oraviţa zone; the *ceapsă with two horns*, spread in Haţeg and made of linen or cotton with wool sewing; the *conic ceapsă*, associated to the cotton white *cloth*, specific to the Pădureni zone.

The *conci*, with its variants – the *conci with passement*, the *conci with coins*, the *cealma* and the *tulbent* – was characteristic to the women's costume in the plain area of the Banat region, coexisting with the *ceapsă* in many areas.

The *conci* is a costume piece of Oriental, south-of-Danube influence which has been adapted to the specificity of the Romanian folk clothing. Researchers consider that it was introduced in the costume by the third decade of the 19th century.[9]

Different shapes of **cepse**



[8-9] Eftimiu Lepăduş. *Ceapsa şi conciul cu variantele lor în Banat* (*The Ceapsă and the Conci with Their Variants in Banat*), p. 101.

The *conci* is made of cotton, silk, shining thread, wool (more rarely) and it is ornamented with silver coins and woven or embroidered lozenges and stylized plant elements. The fine woven patterns, in the technique also used for the decorating of the women's costume pieces *oprege*, the embroideries and the combination of diverse materials (ribbons, passement, lace, coins, artificial flowers, pieces of mirror) turn the *conci* itself into an ornament, harmonizing it with the whole traditional costume of the Banat region, from the point of view of decoration and colour.

The third category of head covers contains two-pieced assemblies, made of a fix part arranged on the head and a large covering that is worn in different manners. According to the way the two pieces are worn, this type of head covers has a few variants: the *căiţă with pomeselnic*, specific to the old women's headdress in the Land of Făgăraş and composed of a fixed bonnet associated to a kind of *ştergar* (kerchief); the *vălitoare with ciurel*, characteristic to the ancient traditional costume of the Sibiu region and made of a thin, scrupulously goffred fabric which is arranged around the head in several circular folds and of a *ciurel*, a square tulle fabric, embroidered at the corners with silk and coloured wool threads; the *vălitoare*, spread in the costume of the areas Târnava and Alba, which is actually a single piece, with a fixed part, wrapped once or twice around a circular support and a freely unfolded part.

The hat constitutes the fourth type of head covers and it is common in the women's folk costume of many areas: Argeş, Muscel, Prahova, Dâmboviţa, Bran, the Land of Olt, Mureş, Târnave, Sibiu, Alba, Cluj, Bihor, Sălaj, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Timiş. The hat has been adopted not only as a consequence of the climate or under the town influence but also because of the attraction that the court feudal costume exerted towards the peasant costume in some areas, as the art historians demonstrate.[10]

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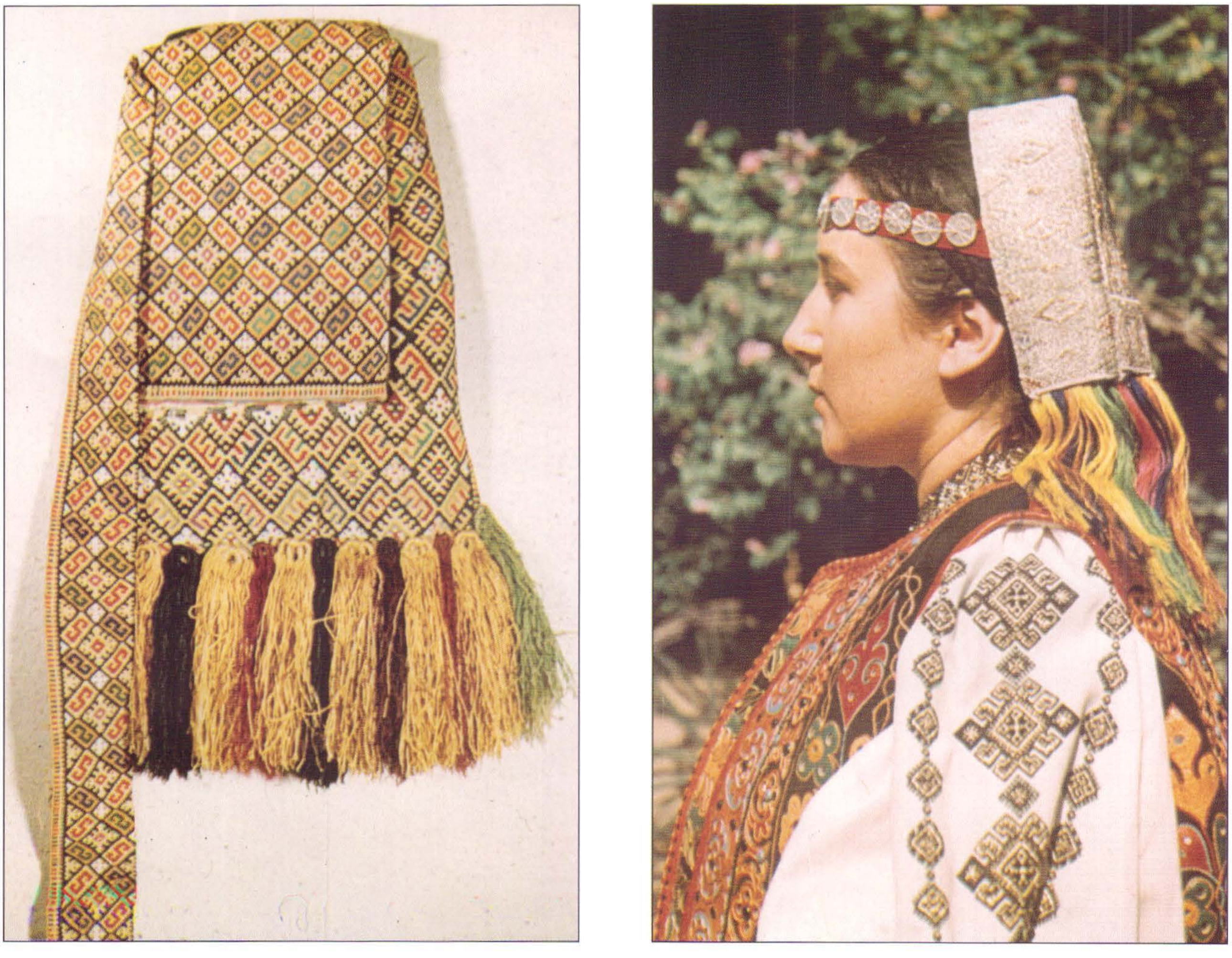
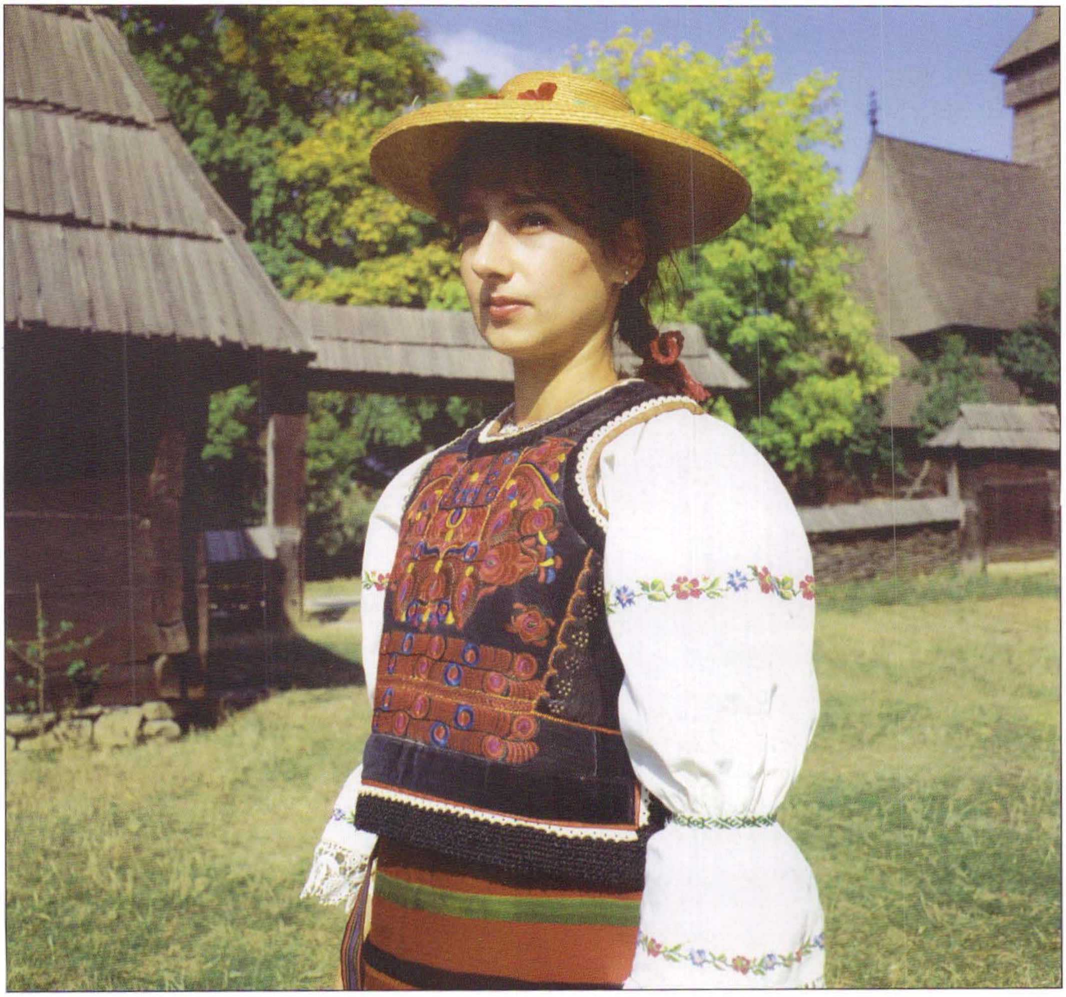
[10] Corina Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului de curte în Ţările Româneşti* [*History of the Court Costume in the Romanian Principalities*], p. 170.



Conciuri of the Banat region



Năsăud hat

The hats are made of felt or straw and have some variants, according to the shape of the calotte and of the rim. Women wear them directly on the bare head or over some head covers (*ştergar, maramă, basma*) that protect their hair, both at work and on holidays. All variants of hats used to be adorned with ribbons, beads, cords, tassels, passement and flowers in the festive clothing of young housewives and girls.

The fez, a head cover of oriental influence adopted in the women's folk costume of the regions Oltenia, Wallachia, Dobrudja, and Moldavia – as the bibliography and the field material collected for the *AER* mention – has the same practical function of keeping the hair in order and it is always covered by a *ştergar* or *maramă*.

All the same, the fez has constituted a sign of social distinction in some areas like the Romanaţi Plain, the Brăila Plain and Dobrudja, being adorned on the rim above the forehead, which was visible under the *ştergar* or *maramă*, by gold or silver coins, by a band ornamented with golden pailletes (imitating coins) or by sequins and beads, according to the welfare of the costume owner.

The fez was worn for the first time during the traditional wedding ceremonial known as *the covering of the bride* or *the fez tying* and it also constituted a consecrating sign for a young married woman, marking her new social and civil status.

The ritual mentioned above stressed the economic differences within the society, because the well-off girls would be given the fez as a present from the godfather, while the poorer girls would get only a small red hood, made of a woven piece of girdle, instead of the more expensive head cover.[11]

The Head Ornaments

The head covers are complemented by a series of ornaments, metal accessories (silver, brass or copper), glass, stone, bone etc., all these having as a function to fix and adorn the head covers and outlining the decorative effect of the headdress by giving the whole

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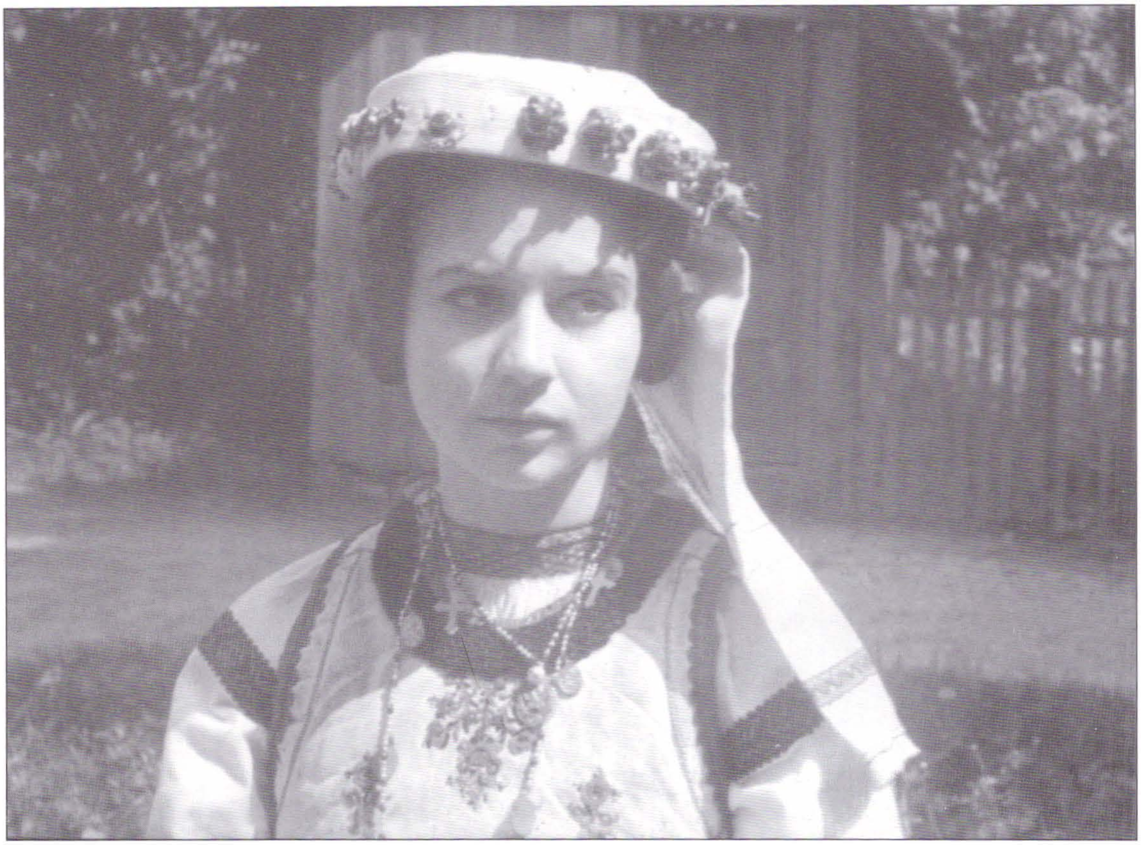
[11] Georgeta Stoica; Virgil Vasilescu, *Portul popular din Gorj (The Folk Costume in the Gorj District)*, pp. 45-46.



Vălitoare *(Târnave area)*

costume a festive, shining, pompous look. For instance, in the Mehedinţi area, the *ştergar* is associated to the so-called *părăluţe* or *scălane* - little silver coins on a small chain, which hung on both sides of the head.[12]

The young married women in the Harghita district would adorn their festive *ştergar* with big pins or *stâlce* (artificial flowers), pinned as a crown around the head.[13]

The women in the zone of the Apuseni Mountains would dress in a similar way, wearing on their heads the *conci* bought at the fair, which had the shape of a white thin cloth hat adorned with 11-12 *bumbuşte* (big decorative pins of golden metal); the women would tie their head kerchief over the *conci*, taking care to show off the metallic accessories.[14]

In all the areas where the *ştergar* and the *maramă* were spread, they were fixed on the head by *spelci* - pins with coloured nail.

The women in the north of Oltenia and Wallachia would wear their *maramă* with *fruntare* (*legători*) - bands of velvet or cloth with embroideries, sewn pailletes, beads, gold or silver coins.

In the Land of Olt, the traditional head cover, composed of *căiţă* and *pomeselnic*, was also associated with the *fruntar* (brow band) of black cloth, adorned with black beads and small triangular ornaments.

In Dobrudja, the *baer* used to tie the fez under the chin was decorated with silver coins and a *flower of coins* was stitched on the fez, above the ears. This ornamental flower was made of three gold coins in the form of a triangle. After this piece went out of fashion, women went on wearing the *cordica de bani* (the *money cord*), which were tied under the chin and then raised to the crown of the head, under the *tulpan*.[15]

The calotte of the *vălitoare* (head cover) in the Târnave area was adorned all around, forming a sort of crown of decorative pins of Saxon type, known as *ţânte*.

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[12] Maria Cioară, *Contribuţii la cunoaşterea portului popular femeiesc din zona Mehedinţi* (*Contributions to the Knowledge on the Women's Folk Costume in the Mehedinţi Area*), p. 11.

[13] ***, *Portul popular din judeţul Harghita, Miercurea Ciuc* (*Folk Costume in Miercurea Ciuc, Harghita District*), p. 11

[14] Lucia Apolzan, *Portul şi industria casnică textilă din Munţii Apuseni* (*Costume and Textile Household Industry in the Apuseni Mountains*), pp. 118-120.

[15] Elena Secoşan, Steluţa Pârâu, *Portul popular românesc din judeţul Tulcea* (*The Romanian Folk Costume in the Tulcea District*), p. 30.

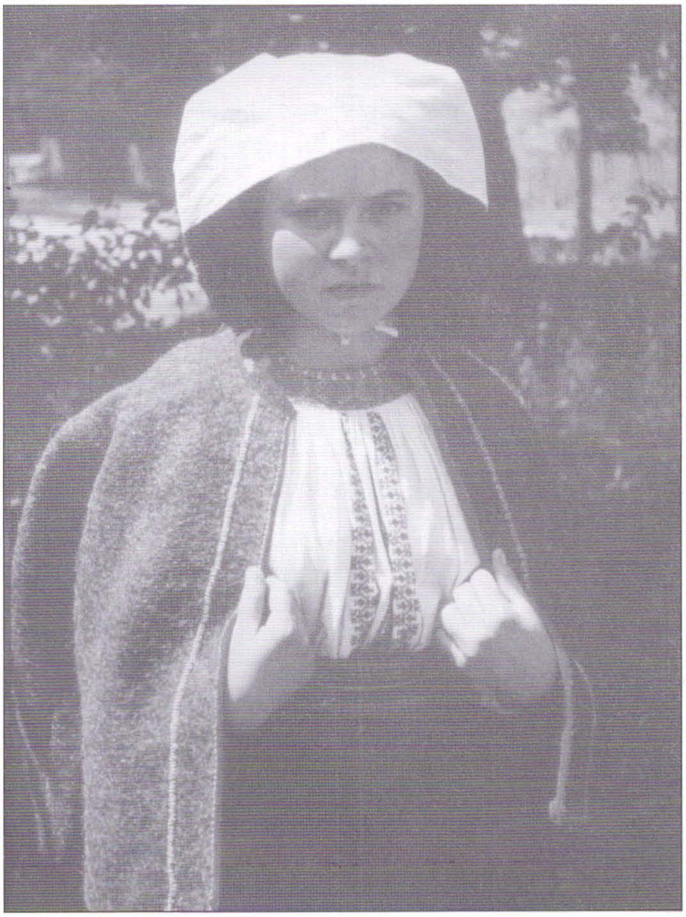
The *ceapsă* and the *conci* of Banat, adorned with metallic thread, lace, beads, cords, ornamental passement and coins, constituted decorations that were in harmony with the other component pieces of the women's folk costume.

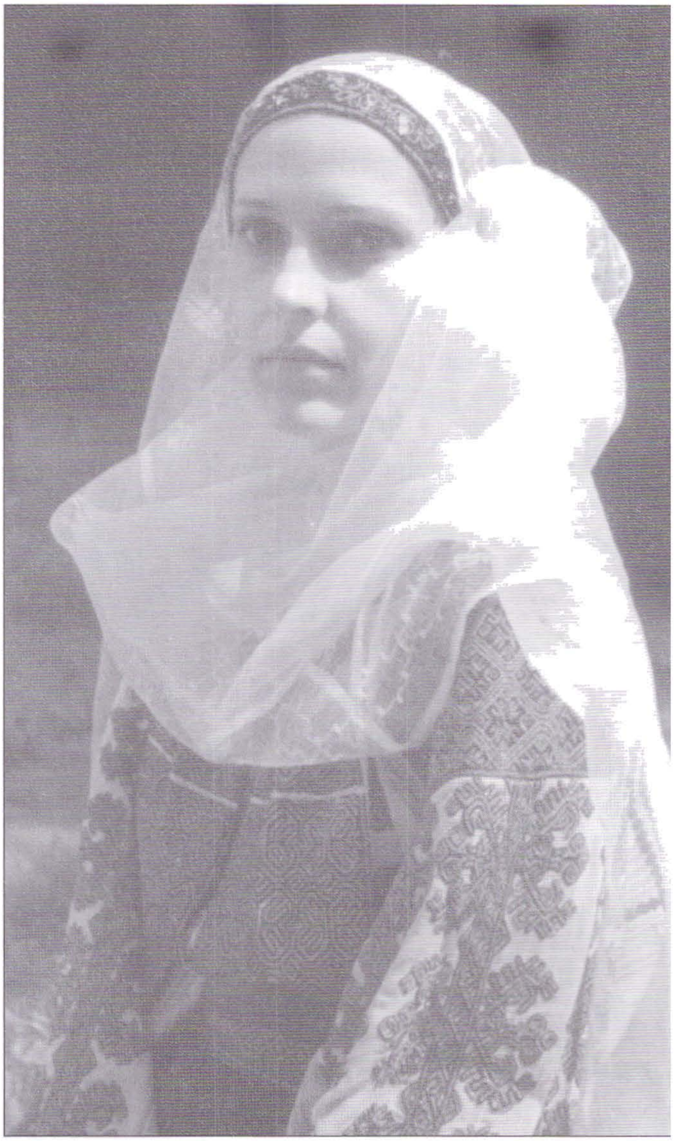
The component elements of the headdress have evolved continuously along time, changing their artistic attributes, renewing their ornamentation and colour and adopting simpler and more modern pieces that have gradually replaced the complex traditional elements, always meeting the people's new needs and aspirations. The rich and diverse headdresses in the Romanian zones are the result of ancient practices and traditions that have been transmitted from one generation to another within the rural communities.

In the above paragraphs, I have tried to present the headdress as a complex structure that completes the outward appearance of the individual and the community and also to analyse in turn all the components of the headdress and their assembling techniques.

At the same time, I have aimed at stressing the important role of distinctive mark that the headdress as a whole plays within Romanian traditional rural communities.

***Căiţă** with **pomeselnic** (Land of Făgăraş)*





***Fruntar** (Brow band – Muscel)*

The Shirt

The articulation of the typology of the pieces that compose a costume is necessary in order to distinguish the Romanian ethnic traits and to point out the specific zonal features, as the costume is a clearly valuable historic and artistic document for the way of life of the ethnic group that owns it.

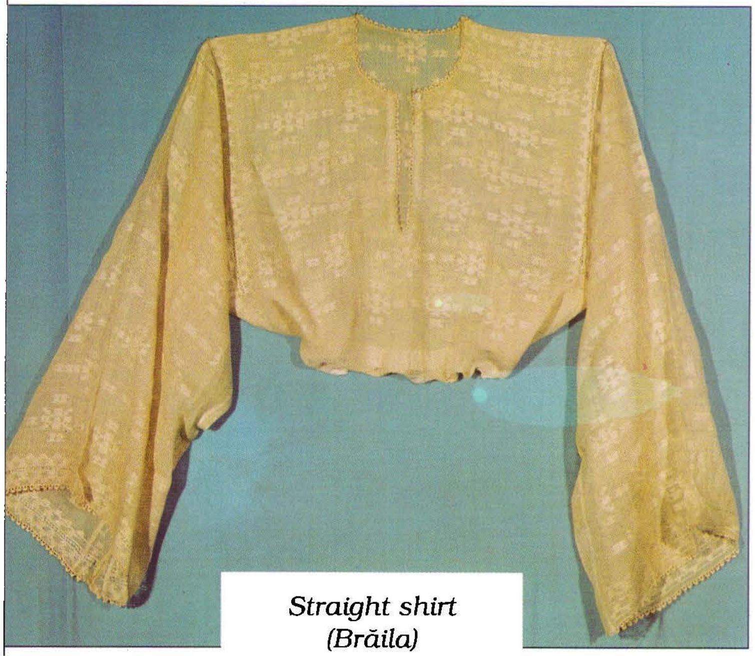
The *shirt* is a basic piece of the women's costume, with numberless morphologic and decorative variants, determined by the tailoring systems and by the modes and techniques of ornamentation.

As it has preserved both archaic cut systems and ancient ornamental motives, the shirt reflects the most specific ethnic features of Romanians.

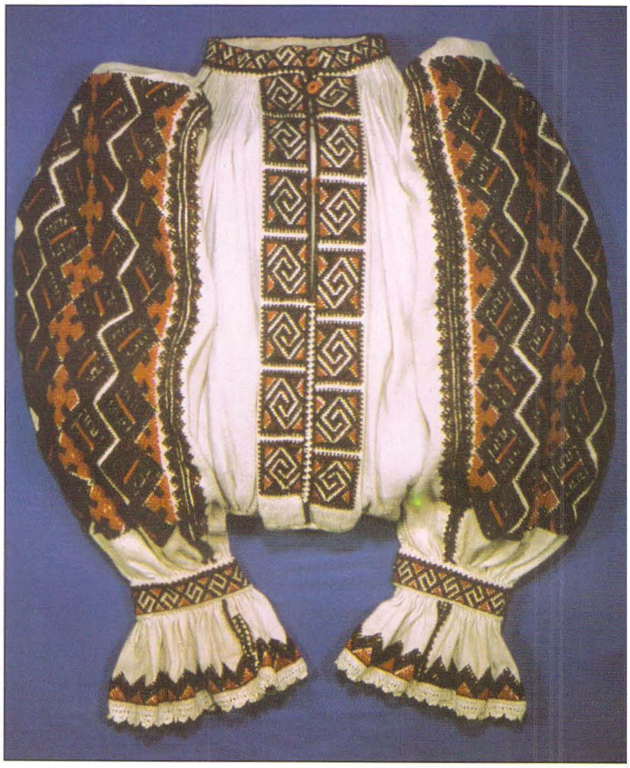
Cut, decoration and chromatic details have always marked the social and economic status of the shirt wearer, her age, her belonging to a certain ethnographic zone and the occasion that required the wearing of a specific type of costume in the traditional rural community.

The criterion that organizes the typology of the shirt is the cut. The way in which the *stani* (the breast parts and the back part) are made and the way of attaching the sleeves (from the shoulder or from the neck) to the *stani* are details that should be considered.

According to these criteria, we distinguish two types of shirt in the Romanian folk costume: *the straight shirt* and *the shirt pleated around the neck* with their many variants. These two types of shirt have coexisted all over the Romanian space, one of them being more or less frequent in one zone or another.



Straight shirt (Brăila)



Pleated shirt (Pădureni)

The straight shirt is part of the primary cultural heritage of mankind, having as a prototype the tunic which archaeological discoveries in the central Europe date even since the Bronze Age.[16]

The *straight shirt* is called *shirt for the old* or *big shirt* in Romania and also on the right side of the Prut River and it is characterized by stylistic and morphologic unity in all its spreading area. All over the Romanian territory, the *straight shirt* is made of hemp, linen, cotton or raw silk, associated and decorated according to the same system, cut in the same ways and named with the same terms.

The straight shirt is cut in straight sheets: the *body* of the shirt is made of a single straight sheet of material, which is cut in the middle for the neck and falls down on the breast and on the back. The sleeves are two straight pieces of material that are connected to the *body* (*stani*) at the shoulders.

By its simple cut, the straight shirt, made of only three rectangular pieces (sheets) and initially without a collar, is valued as a document in the history of the folk costume. This archaic cut has been preserved at the Moldavian shirts on both sides of the Prut River up to our days.

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[16] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România* (*The Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 31.

As the house woven cloth was very narrow, its width being at most of 50 centimetres, the body of the shirt was further enlarged by adding on each of the lateral parts one half of a sheet of cloth, cut on the length or diagonally and called *gore*.

To create a larger space of movement for the arm, a rectangular or triangular piece of cloth, called *pavă* and having the side length of 5-8 centimetres was added under the armpit.

The sleeves were either large at the ends or tightened on *bracelets*, which were little bands of about 3-4 centimetres in width closed with buttons or ended with small flounces.

The straight shirt didn't have a collar at first and then had a narrow band around the neck, with a slide in the front. The streaks in the cloth texture were obtained by weaving with fibres of different qualities. Some of these were coloured and thus the first decorative system was constituted.

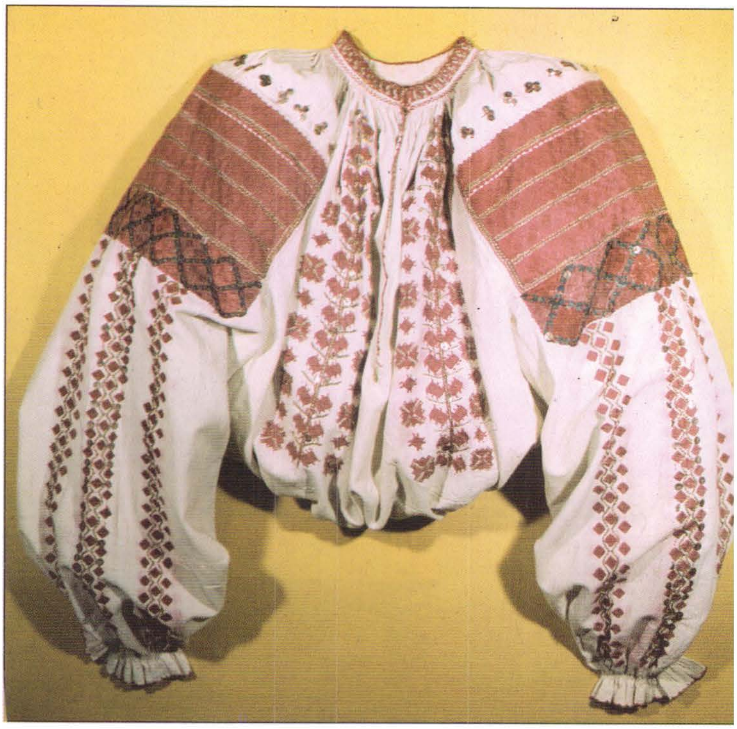
The very discreet decoration was geometric or with vegetal motives and it was done along the cut lines: around the neck, on the shoulders, at the ends of the sleeves, on the laps and on the collar, in case the shirt had one.

The shirt with inset (platcă) is widespread in the Romanian folk costume and a variant of the straight shirt that was adopted by peasants in the latter half of the 19th century, under the influence of the town.

The shirt pleated around the neck, known in the bibliography as the *Carpathian* shirt, is as old as the Thracian civilisation, as the statues discovered by archaeologists at Cucuteni (Iaşi district), Vădastra (Olt district) and also at Butmir or Vintcha in the Balkans demonstrate.

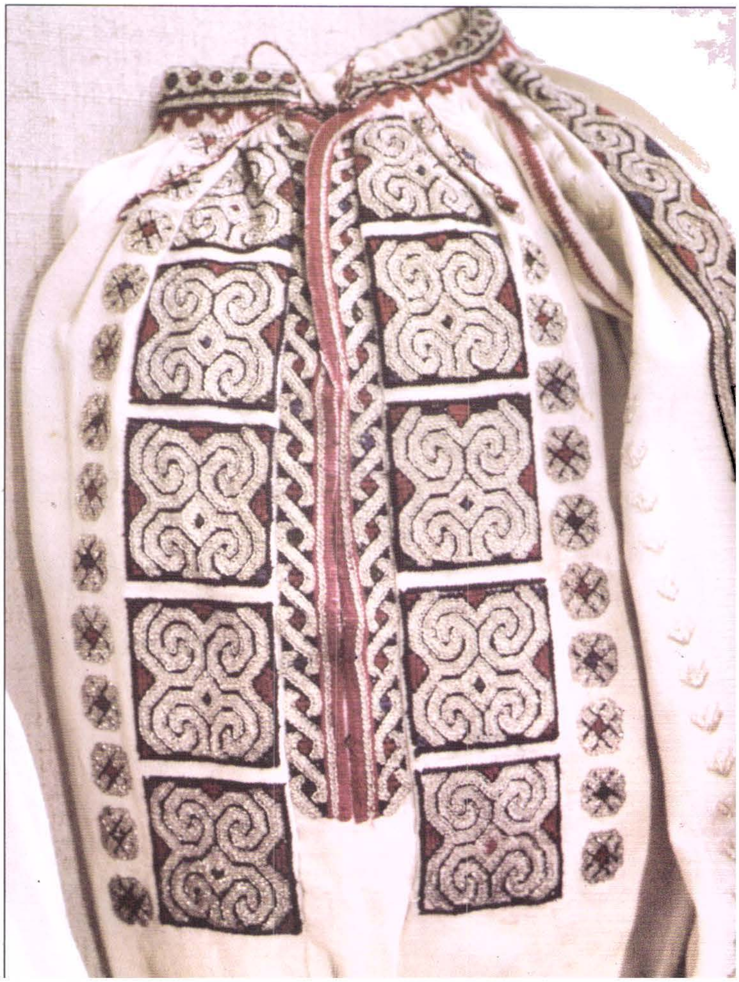
The prototype of the pleated shirt, which has been preserved in the female folk costume up to the present, can be recognized in the Dacian shirts represented on the Column of Trajanus and on the Roman monument of Adamclisi (Dobrudja region), in the shirt worn by an Illirian woman on the territory of Croatia and in the shirt engraved on a funeral stone, dating from the 3rd or 4th century AD and preserved at the Archaeological Museum of Zagreb.

Therefore, the shirt pleated around the neck continues a morphologic tradition that belongs to the Illyrian-Dacian-Thracian culture. The area of circulation for this type of shirt includes Central and South-Eastern European areas (in Slovakia, Moravia, south of Poland, Ukraine across the Carpathians, Bulgaria, and Serbia).[17]



Shirt pleated around the neck (Teleorman)

Shirt pleated around the neck (Vrancea)



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[17] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Arta populară bucovineană (The Folk Art of Bucovina)*, p. 283.

The shirt pleated around the neck is characteristic for the folk costume in all the Romanian territory, except the areas delimited by the Maramureş district, by Dobrudja and by the territory in the east of the big Romanian Plain.

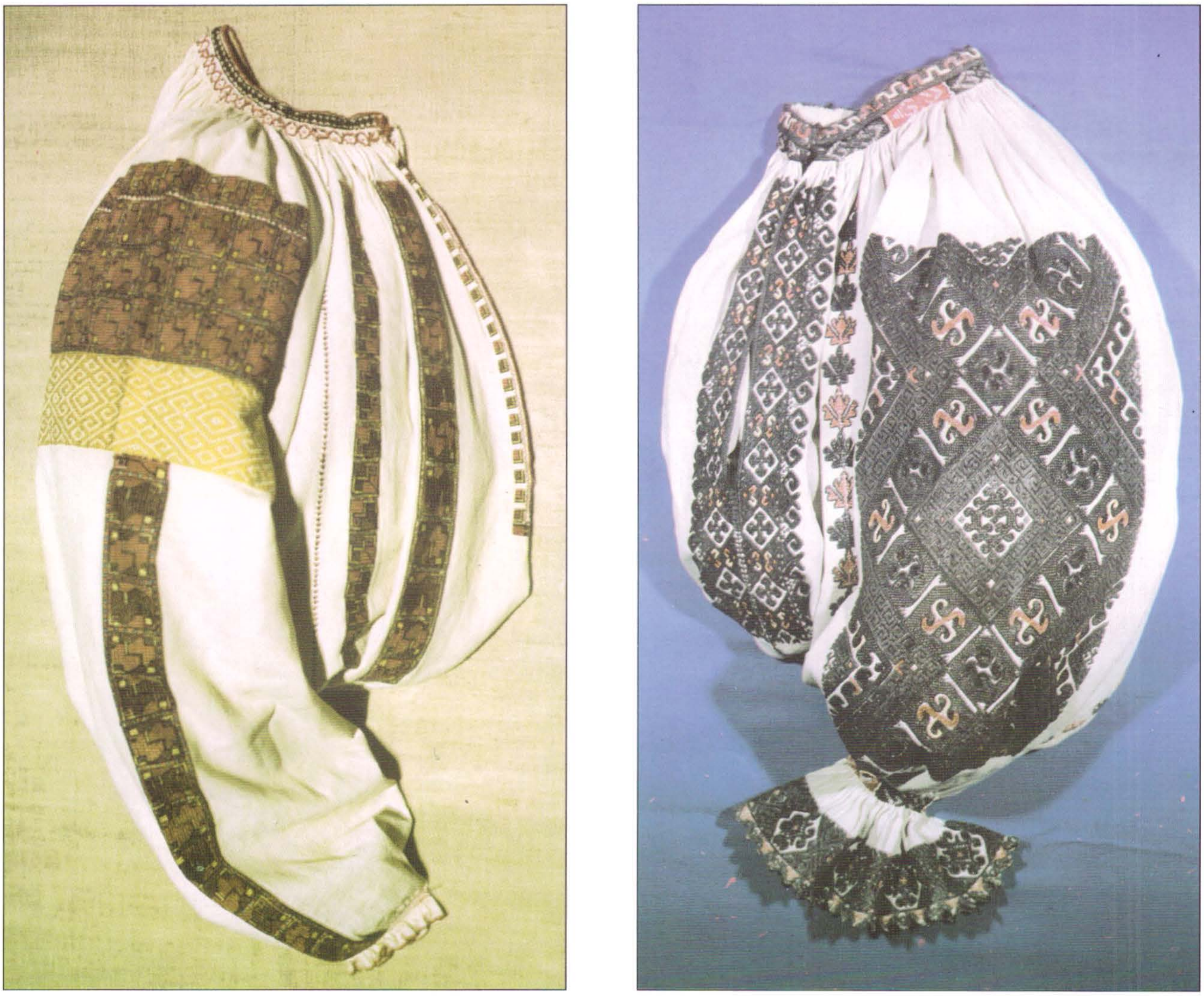
The shirt pleated around the neck is cut of four pieces: two for the *stani* and two for the sleeves. The neck of the shirt is formed by pleating the whole width of the *stani* and the upper parts of the sleeves. The archaic form of this type of shirt is still spread in the Moldavian land on both sides of the Prut River, where people tighten the pleats of the shirts around the neck with a hemp or linen string called *brezărău*. The collar is like a narrow band applied over the neck pleats and it belongs to a later phase in the evolution of the shirt.

The sleeves are either large at the ends or pleated by thread, in a similar way as at the neck pleat. The sleeves could also be ended by a small band or flounce.

The ornamental motives appear on the sleeves, in the three traditional ranges: *altiţă*, *încreţ* (pleat), *râuri* (*rivers*), on the breast (on both sides of the neck slide), on the back and on the laps of the shirts.

For the Transylvania and Banat regions, there are other ornamental systems characteristic for adorning the sleeves of the shirts. By using textile coloured fibres in artful combinations and also sequins and brightly coloured beads or golden and silver threads to border and display the decorated spaces, by alternating the colourful foreground and the white background and by knowing how to combine decorated fields with fields empty of ornament, the women who create folk shirts amplify the artistic value of their work, turning each piece into an unique creation of the Romanian folk patrimony.

The special importance of the shirt among other pieces of the folk costume lies in its multiple functions: the shirt marks the ethnic and regional identity of a woman, indicates her age, the occasion of wearing, her economic, social and civil status; it also has a symbolic ritual function during the wedding ceremonial.



Shirt pleated around the neck (Vlaşca and Bistra Valley - Banat)

The Wearing of Complementary Pieces

The category of textiles that cover the laps of the female shirt contains a great number of pieces, associated according to different schemes.

These cover textiles, called complementary pieces, are worn over the shirt as such or they are associated to other costume pieces which have the same function of covering the laps of the women's shirt.

By investigating the modes of associating the covers all over Romania we notice that women combine similar pieces (for example, partial covers, like two *catrinţe*, a *catrinţă* and an *opreg*, a *catrinţă* and an *apron*, two *oprege*) or different pieces (a whole cover is associated with a partial cover: a *vâlnic* with a *catrinţă*, a *fotă* with a *catrinţă*, a skirt with *catrinţă*, a *skirt* with an *apron*, an *androc* with a *catrinţă*, an *androc* with an *apron*). The complementary pieces can be associated in varied ways that actually structure the local-zonal variants of the principal types of costume.

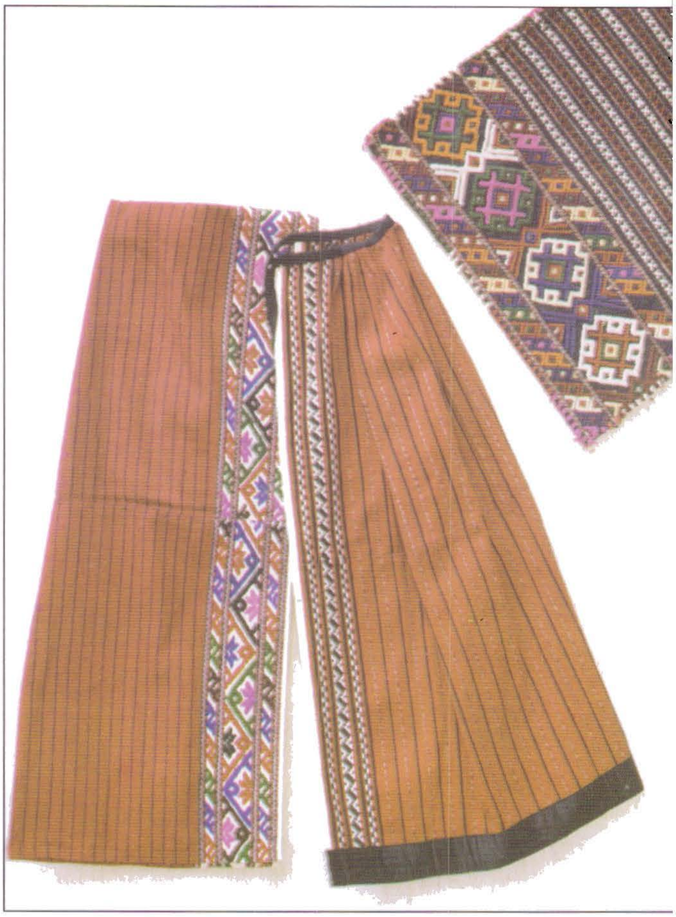
The catrinţă, which is a partial cover, has several morphologic variants: the *catrinţă* made of one piece, the *catrinţă* made of two pieces sewn on the horizontal dimension and the *catrinţă* made of two pieces sewn on the vertical dimension. The most frequent is the one-piece *catrinţă*.

The *catrinţă* is fixed around the waist by a girdle and it can be worn in pair, one at the front and one at the back, the two *catrinţe* having the same dimensions or different lengths and widths (association which is more common). It can also be worn over the laps at the front (in the districts Oaş, Bihor, Arad) or associated with other costume element like the tasselled (fringed) *opreg*, the *fotă*, the *vâlnic*, the *apron*, the *skirt*.

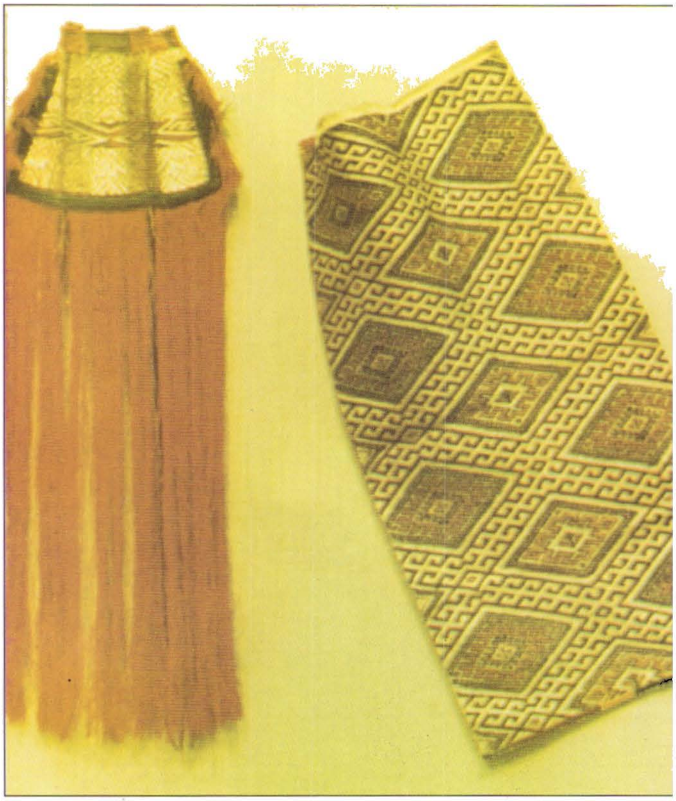
The tasselled opreg is a variant of the *catrinţă*, having as component elements the *patch* (the woven part) and the *tassels*, which vary in dimensions and decorative and chromatic composition from one zone to another. Women would wear two *oprege*, at the front and at the back of the laps before 1900 and then they wore an *opreg* just at the back and a *catrinţă* at the front (the districts Timiş and Caraş-Severin).

The apron is a variant of the *catrinţă* and women have always worn it at the front, as such (the districts Satu Mare, Bihor, Sălaj, Arad, Hunedoara) or in association with other costume elements: the *catrinţă*, the *skirt*, the *androc*).

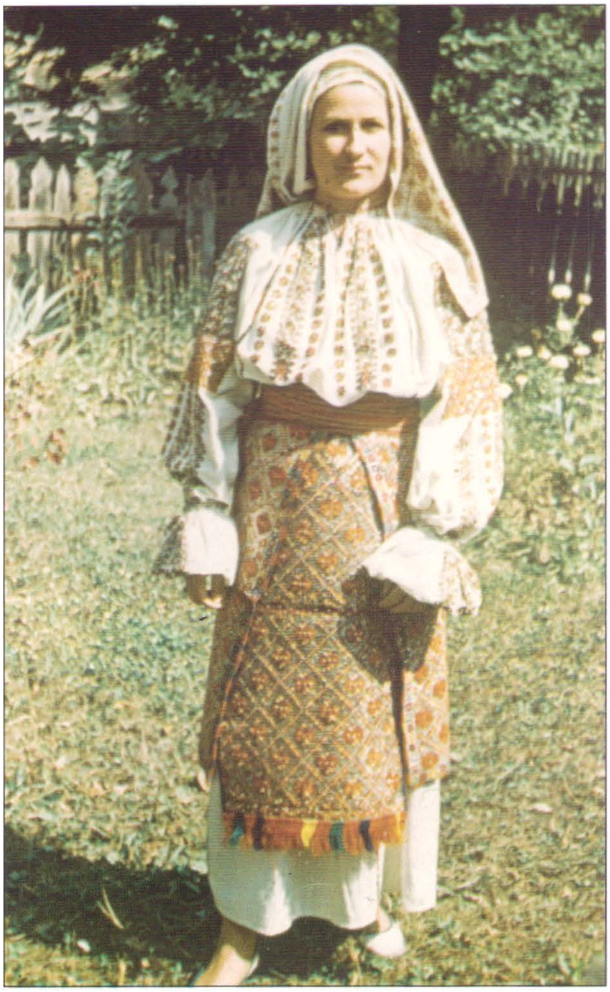
The fotă has also different morphologic variants: the classic straight *fotă* tightly wrapped around the lower part of the body and the *pleated fotă*. Usually, women wear the *pleated fotă* as such but also associated with the *catrinţă* in an area limited to the districts Argeş and Vâlcea.



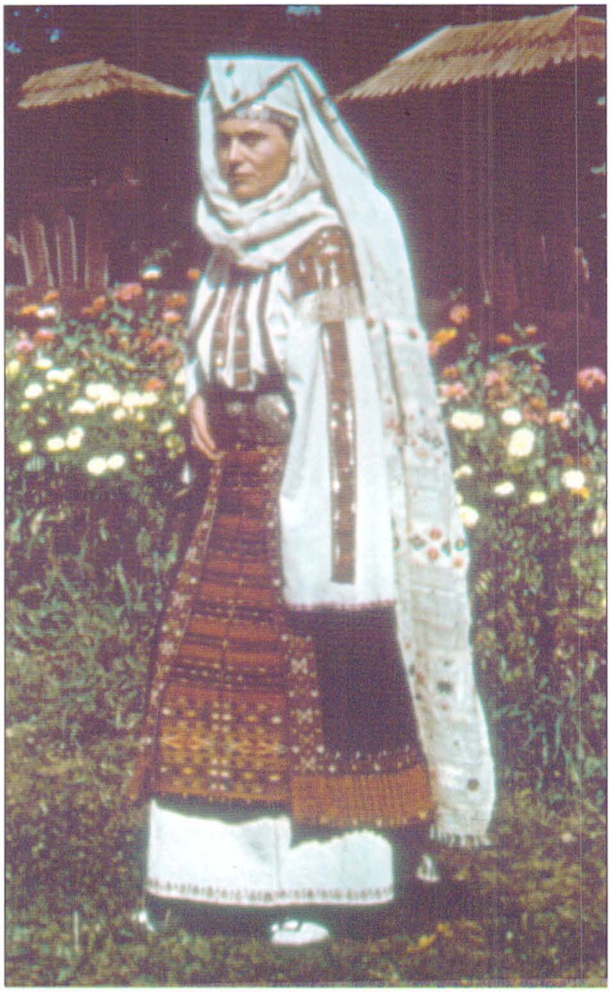
*Paired **catrinţe** (Dobrudja)*



***Catrinţă** with **opreg** (Banat)*



***Fotă** with **catrinţă** (Argeş)*



*A woman's folk costume with **peşteman** (Vlaşca)*

When it is combined with the *catrinţă*, the *fotă* is shorter and the association creates a morphologic and decorative effect.[18]

In the case of the *pleated fotă*, its most frequent variants are named the *fotă of Prahova*, the *fotă of Moieciu* and the *peşteman of Vlaşca*. Similar to some pleated skirts, these *fote* are usually integrated into the winter costume and they are made of one or two pieces of rectangular woven material, which are creased or pleated.

The word *peşteman* is of Turkish origin and it is also used in other south-eastern European languages. As in the case of *catrinţă* and *opreg*, which are named with the same term in some areas, the *peşteman* indicates costume pieces with different shape and decoration, that circulate not only in the Danube valley (Vlaşca region) but also in other zones like some villages in the districts Bacău (Orbeni, Răcăciuni, Scurta), Timiş (near Timişoara), or Dâmboviţa (Târgovişte).

Special attention must be paid to the terminology used in the special literature, on one hand, and to the terms in use at local or zonal level, on the other hand, as the same term may refer to very different pieces (in point of morphologic and ornamental structure) in distinct ethnographic zones or even within the same zone.

On the other side, we also have to point out the fact that some costume variants, like the ones with *fotă* and *catrinţă* or with *peşteman* and *catrinţă*, are more recent associations of pieces, because a series of stamps and drawings in the 18th and the 19th centuries show the same type of costume without a *catrinţă* in the front.

The vâlnic, another total cover of the laps of the women's shirt, appearing like a not-sewn skirt, is worn as such or in combination with the *catrinţă*. As in the combination of *fotă* with *catrinţă*, the *vâlnic* is associated with *catrinţă* according to structural and decorative matching (districts Mehedinţi, Gorj, Vâlcea, Dolj, Olt, Argeş).

The other total covers – the *skirt* and the *androc* – differ only in material, ornamentation modes and the occasions of wearing (the decorated skirt is destined more to holiday wearing while the *androc* is usually worn at work, except for the *androc* in Bacău district) but have similar shapes. Women wear them as such or in combination with the *catrinţă* or the *apron.*

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[18] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România (The Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 75.

According to the questionnaires for the *AER*, the spreading area of the type of costume with skirt and *catrinţă* includes the districts Brăila, Tulcea, Constanţa, Buzău, Călăraşi, Giurgiu, Braşov, Timiş, Maramureş.

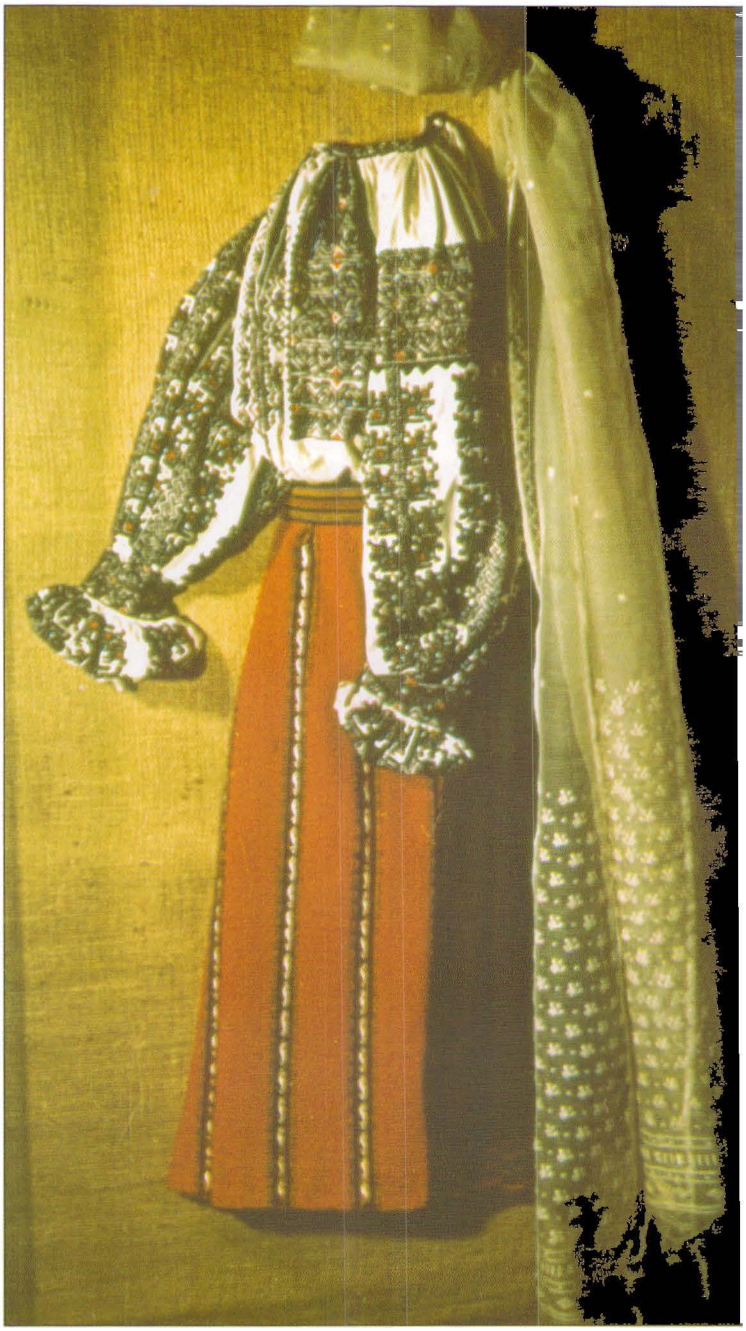
The skirt with apron is common in the folk costume of almost any zone of Romania.

The spreading area of the costume with *androc* and *catrinţă* is limited to the districts Tulcea, Constanţa, Călăraşi, Ialomiţa and Braşov, while the costume with *androc* and *apron* is frequent in the districts Covasna, Braşov, Prahova, Dâmboviţa and Buzău.

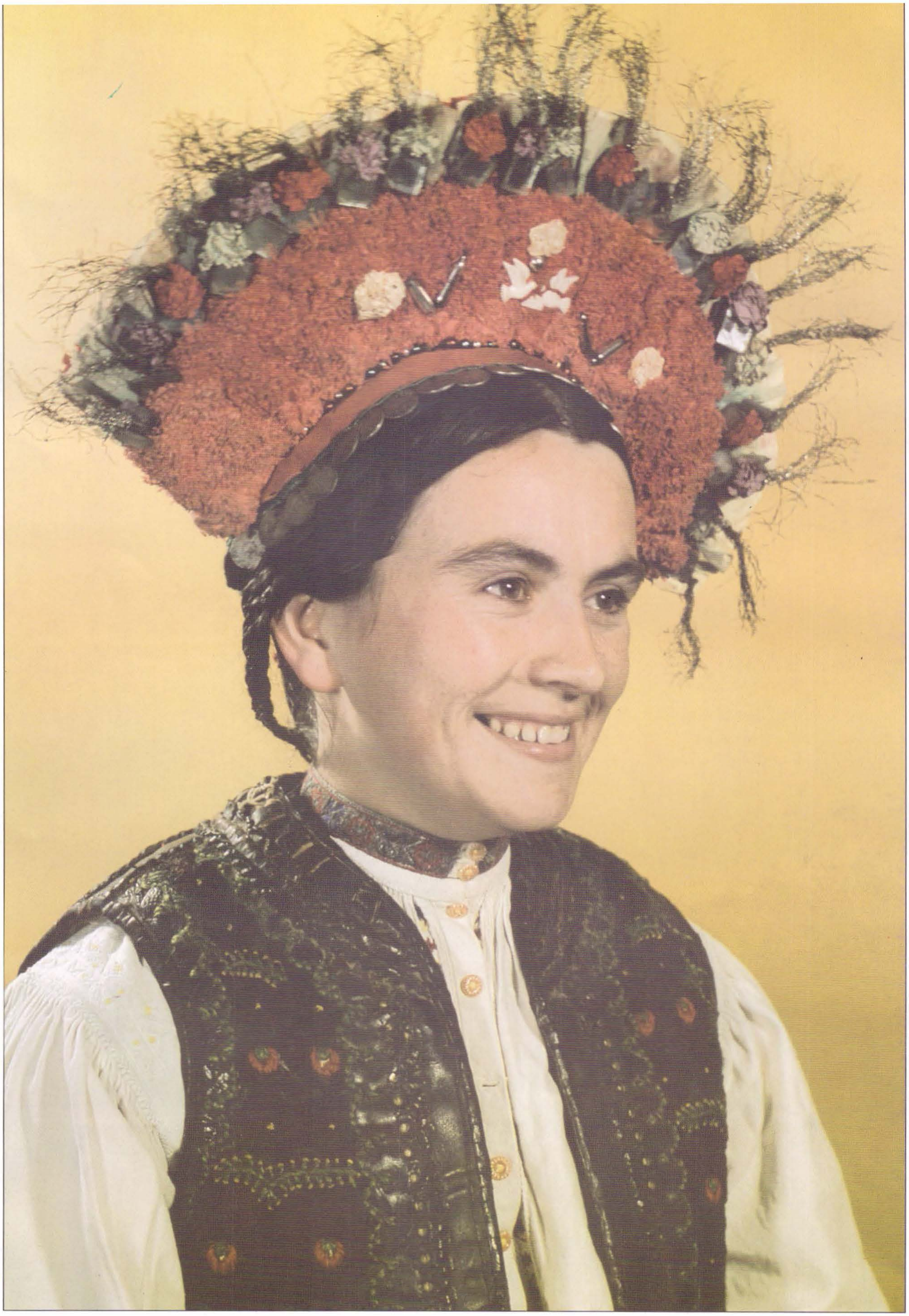
There are some variants of the Romanian folk costume that indicate the connections with the costumes of the neighbouring cultures, as a result of reciprocal influences exerted along time. For example, the Romanian folk costume has common elements with the Slovak folk costume in the north-west of the country (the districts Oaş, Bihor, Arad), as the pleated laps associated with *catrinţă* or apron only at the front, while the back of the shirt is uncovered, do not respect the Romanian tradition that imposes for married women the covering of the laps both at the front and at the back.

According to field research data, exceptions from the rule above appear only in the folk costumes of girls in the areas Land of Olt, Sălaj, Vâlcea, but also in the Romanian and the Serbian region of Banat. Therefore, there are cultural norms specific to certain zones that indicate the ways of wearing some costume pieces at different age categories, in order to mark the status of the costume wearers within the traditional community.

The combinations of the folk costume pieces create an obviously sculpture-like appearance of the women, revealing their figure, the curves of their hips and the frailty of the waist by assembling refined clothing elements.



A woman's folk costume with a ***fotă***
(Moieciu – Bran)



Folk jewels and ornaments

One would wonder how many hands touched the precious coins engraved with crowns and effigies of kings before they were strung in the coin necklaces (*salbe*) of the peasant women. How many countries and ages have these coins gone through?

The ornaments have always transcended frontiers and ethnic lifestyles, conferring to the women's festive or ceremonial costumes a tint of glamour.

The jewels have gone a long way from their initial magic value to the social mark of today, when they refer to the sex, age, occasion and civil status of the person who wears them.

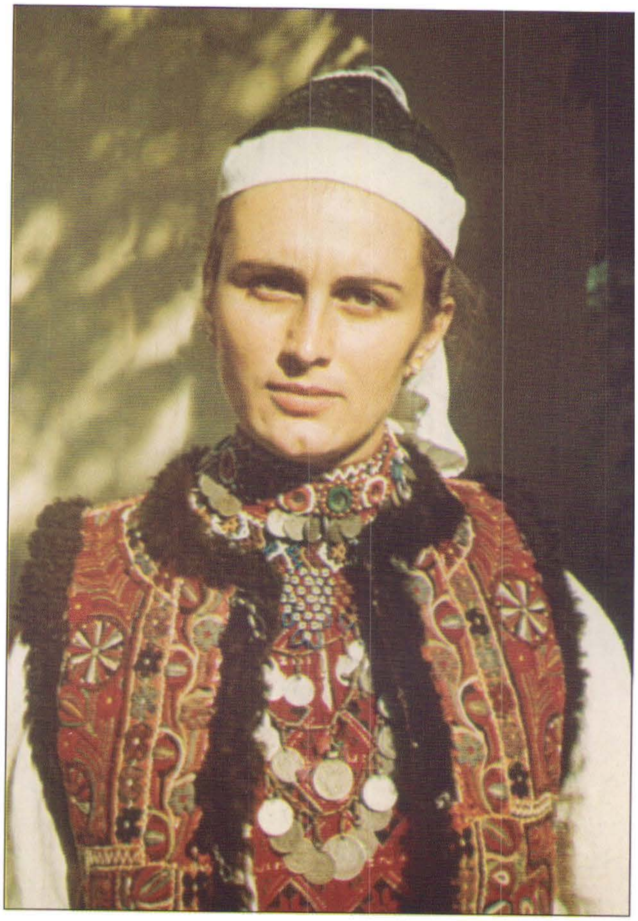
Jewels and ornaments are made of varied materials (gold, silver, copper, brass, tin, aluminium, lead, bronze, coral, glass, stone, bone) by using different techniques according to the material and the object that had to be made (some frequent procedures were melting, casting, cold or hot forging, hardening, cutting, incising, stamping, incrusting in wood or in bone, combining with glass, bone, beads). Just the inventory of materials and technique gives us an idea of the multitude of products that craftsmen would create in traditional manner.

As far as the precious metals are concerned, gold and silver were obtained by the archaic system of sifting the auriferous sand at the bottom of the rivers in the mountains, attested by numerous documents or by transforming gold and silver coins into ornaments.

The art of crafting and further adorning the ornaments has evolved differently in the historic provinces of Romania. In Wallachia and Moldavia it has been mainly based on ancient techniques that have hardly changed; in Transylvania it has developed remarkably, also as a consequence of the cultural exchanges of Romanians in that province with other ethnic groups.

The ornaments are a mark of wealth in the rural world, showing the position of a woman on the social scale and her belonging to a certain social group. Ornaments are an emblem and an identity symbol that members of a certain category should wear under different circumstances in order to assert their position.

← *Headdress (Sălaj district)*



Woman from the Pădureni area on a festive day

In one of her studies[1], Georgeta Stoica dissociates between ornaments and jewels and such a distinction is relevant for the village society, which was multi-levelled in the feudal and post-feudal periods as women would wear jewels and ornaments according to their social-economic position.

While the people in the upper social level would afford to adorn their garments with precious jewels made of gold or veritable pearls, many of which were brought from abroad, people of a poorer status would just imitate such jewels, crafting their ornaments out

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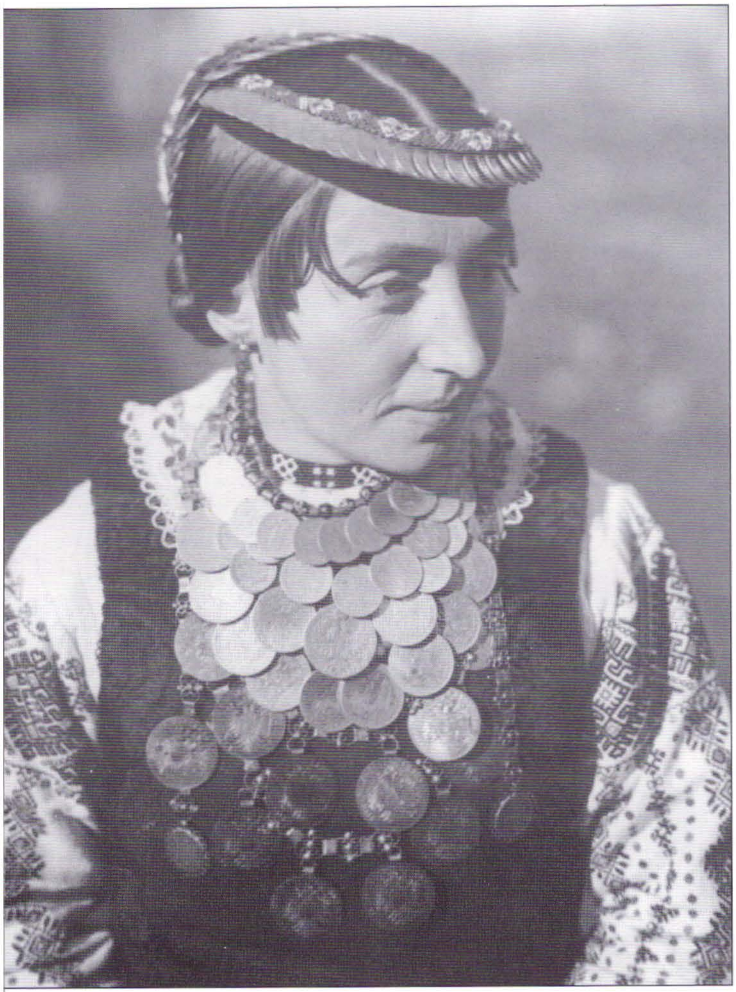
[1] Georgeta Stoica, *Podoabele populare româneşti* (*The Romanian Folk Adornments*), p. 6.



Woman wearing a traditional costume and silver coin ornaments (zone Oraviţa – Banat)

of cheaper materials: copper, aluminium, glass, bone, stone, wood, and ceramics.

Jewels and ornaments correspond to the social level of their wearers in point of material, shape and decoration.

The coin necklaces made of gold and silver coins were the most precious jewels in the rural society since they pointed out precisely the economic status of their owners. The coin necklaces were considered valuables and mentioned in dowry acts.

The number of the rows of coins that composed the golden necklace indicated the wealth of a woman in the plain villages in the south of Romania. The necklace of *mahmudele* (a kind of Turkish coins) was made of one up to four big gold coins sewn at the middle of a black ribbon or put on a small chain. On both sides of the *mahmudele,* smaller gold coins called *icuşari* were placed.

The costume in the centre of Romania (Săcele and Şcheii Braşovului settlements) was initially quite modest and unitary for the whole population, but in time some of the inhabitants of this area got very rich and they started to use imported materials and precious gold and silver coins in order to adorn their extremely sumptuous, elegant and expensive costumes, designed especially to make them stand out among the other inhabitants of the Land of Bârsa.

The women in Săcele and Şcheii Braşovului would wear the *ghiordan,* an expensive jewel made of gold coins of different dimensions which were strung on a black velvet band with red margins. They could wear up to 16 gold coins, according to their social-economic status.[2]

An article in the publication *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (*Transylvania Gazette*) described the beauty and opulence of the women's costumes in Şcheii Braşovului in 1929: "Such a wonderful garment this costume is, with long dresses made of brocades of thick silk, with vests adorned with precious buttons, with charming girdles studded with precious stones and ended by metal clasps, with golden necklaces and heavy furred mantles of Indian satin called *malotele*".[3]

The jewels made of gold coins had a ceremonial function as well, as brides would wear them at their weddings to indicate distinctly their material status within the community: "As a bride, she crossed the threshold of the hut wearing a six gold coin necklace around her neck. In only one year, her necklace got three more gold coins. The golden necklace is wealth for any house, not just for a poor man's house. Not every woman has a golden necklace".[4] This relevant description of the ethnographic reality in the district Teleorman, situated in the south of Romania is included by the writer Zaharia Stancu in his novel *Desculţ* (*Barefooted*).

The well-off girls would wear complex and extremely expensive jewels made of gold coins beginning with the age of 14 or 15, especially in the villages along the Danube River.

Craftsmen of the town Turnu Măgurele got specialized in making such expensive jewels like the coin loop (*conciul de bani*). The coin loop was circular in shape and approximately three inches long. It was made of frieze and always lined with a resistant material and it prolonged at the back down to the waist in a kind of triangle, sewn with rows of golden coins on its entire surface. Rows of golden coins were also sewn on the front margin and on the lateral sides of the *conci.*

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[2] George Moroianu, *Chipuri din Săcele* [*Portraits of Săcele*], p. 10.

[3] *Cf.* Georgeta Stoica; Olivia Moraru, *Semne de recunoaştere în costumul din Săcele şi Şcheii Braşovului* (*Specific Signs of the Costume of Săcele and Şcheii Braşovului*), p. 340.

[4] Zaharia Stancu, *Desculţ* (*Barefooted*), p. 7.

As an obligatory piece with ritual significance, the coin loop had also a social-economic function, symbolizing wealth.[5]

Even married women would keep on wearing the *conci* on holidays: "My grandmother would wear a *conci* on her head on Sundays at the round dance, at weddings or christenings, when she would always wear her festive clothes. The *conci* of my grandmother was studded with gold coins. The gold coins would clink strongly in the storm of the round dance. Seven *icuşari* in each of her ears were hanging as earrings, strung on a silk thread, down to her shoulders. They were heavy, they were pure gold!".[6]

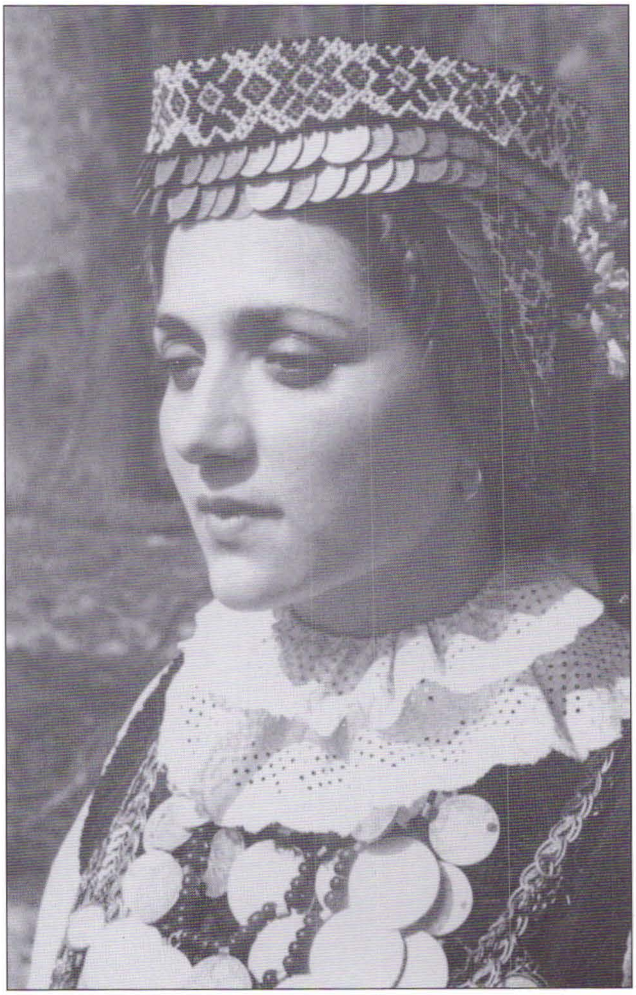
This literary memory comes to complete the ethnographic field data, creating a vivid and plastic image of the visual and sonorous effect produced by the precious jewels of coins.

The unmarried girls in the Romanian villages of the Serbian Banat region would go to the round dance wearing on their heads extremely expensive and complex ornaments, made of gold and silver coins, spangles, natural and artificial flowers, long silk ribbons and other elements meant to give them strength and vitality. Their hairdo was with a *moţ* (the hair in the front was raised on the crown of the head and tied with a ribbon), around which the so-called *fruntar* was placed. The *fruntar* was made of a 15 centimetres long and 5 centimetres wide piece of cardboard, wrapped in *somot* (black velvet) or in black silk. Four to eight gold or silver coins were sewn at the middle of the *fruntar*, *snowdrops* (*ghiocei*) (sequins) were fixed on its margins and artificial flowers were stitched on the upper and lower parts of the ornaments. Natural flowers were fixed on the right side of the *fruntar* (basil, dahlias, roses - that bear an ancient vegetal symbolism, being related to the tree of life with its magic connotations) and on the left side a *pup* was placed. The *pup* was an ornament made of a red or rosy pleated ribbon (with "gores"), which had a straight part of about 20 centimetres at the end.[7]

The ceremonial wedding costume in the Pădureni area would include the *girdle with coins* (*baier cu bani*), an ornament made of big silver coins.

The brides, godmothers and well-off women in the north of Moldavia would wear around their necks gold and silver thalers on a necklace.

In the Bucium area of the Apuseni Mountains (in the west of Romania), where the exploitation of gold mines ensured a very good economic status of the inhabitants of the area, the costume expressed the material superiority of the *buciumani*.



Conci *with coins* (**mununǎ**)
(zone Oraviţa – Banat)

B. Havasi (Lukács), knowing very well the reality in the Apuseni Mountains in the latter half of the 19th century, wrote an account of the sumptuous and elegant costume of Bucium: "The women wear silk *catrinţe*, they have gold and silver ornaments around their necks and waists and the fingers covered with rings and their garments abound in lace and silk"[8].

During the field research that I conducted in the Bucium area in the summer of 1988, I found out that the well-off women would wear extremely expensive jewels, brought from Vienna: gold earrings with genuine pearls and a big ruby in the middle, earrings in the shape of leaves or grapes, rings, gold brooches, chains with gold and precious stone medallions.

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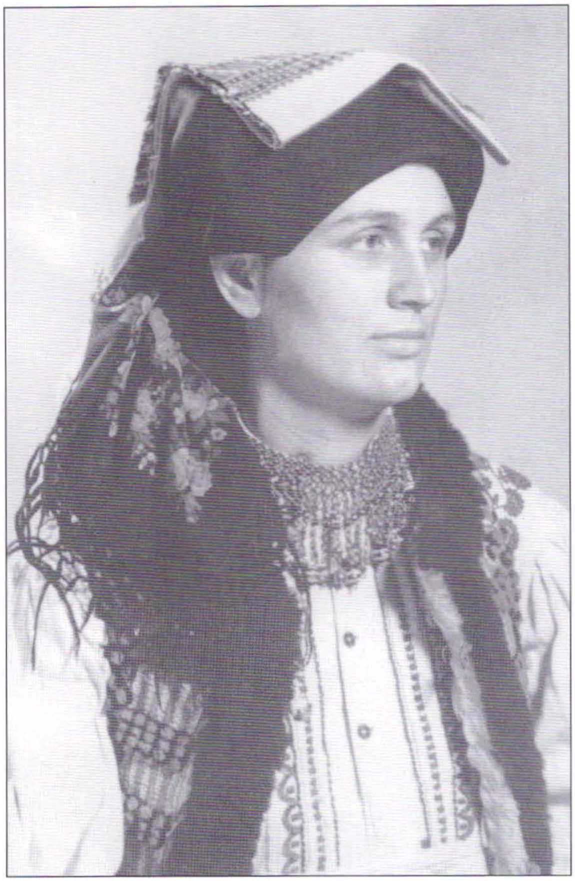
[5] Maria Cioară-Bâtcă; Vlad Bâtcă, *Zona etnografică Teleorman* (*Ethnographic Zone Teleorman*), p. 126.

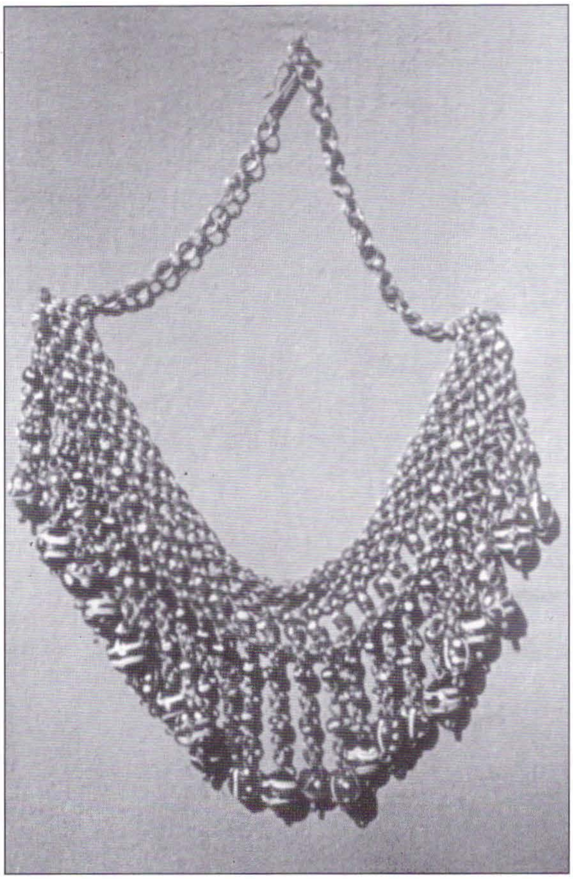
[6] Zaharia Stancu, *Desculţ* (*Barefooted*), p. 7.

[7] Informer Mărioara Sârbu, age 70, Uzdin.

[8] Nicolae Dunăre; Marcela Focşa, *Portul buciumanilor din Munţii Apuseni* (*Costume of the* buciumani *in the Apuseni Mountains*), p. 8.



Woman wearing a Venetian bead necklace with drot of Bihor and a specific necklace



The coin jewels that were worn on the head, around the neck, as earrings, bracelets or rings or as girdles with the coins set on a metallic thread, chain, cord or ribbon or on a support of coloured leather, thick velvet or silk were most frequent and general as parts of the folk costume all around Romania.

The most famous areas for the richness and diversity of jewels made of coins and sometimes associated with Venetian beads, metal or coral plates were Banat, Bihor, Crişana, Oaş, Maramureş, Năsăud, Pădurenii Hunedoarei, the Northern Moldavia, the Brăila Plain, Dobrudja, Teleorman and Oltenia.

At first, only the daughters and wives of the *nemeşi* (members of the village gentry) would wear coral necklaces, known locally as *expensive collars* (*zgărzi scumpe*), brought from Bohemia and Austria, in the areas Maramureş and Oaş during the 18th century and in the first half of the 19th century. Later, all the well-off women would adopt the coral jewels.

These necklaces were made of 20-30 rows of coral nucleuses set in silver rings and each row had a big coral in the middle. Such an expensive collar, that included also gold and silver coins, would cost as much as a few pairs of oxen.

The coral necklaces were worn now and then even in the north of Moldavia, in Hunedoara district and in the border zones of Năsăud, but the coral pieces were set on brass or tin rings.

The coral beads were often combined with Venetian beads, rosettes and crosses cast in bronze with a rich incised decoration or even with silver coins.

The glass or ceramic Venetian beads, original or Murano imitations, brought by tradesmen from Italy or Bohemia or crafted by the Czech and Slovak colonists who worked in the glass factories (*hute*) of Bihor district, had also an important social function. As they were very expensive, only the well-off could afford to buy them. The preferred colours were black, blue and dark red in Transylvania and yellow, light blue and white in Moldavia.

The beads had incrusted geometrical motives (circles, points) or vegetal motives and they were sometimes set into a metallic support. The rich women of Bihor associated the Venetian beads with small silver coins and with rosettes worked in filigree wire.[9]

Women in the regions Oltenia, Wallachia and Dobrudja would also wear coral as coral little branches (on one or two rows).

Besides the jewels made of precious metals, there are some ethnographic enclaves in Romania (Hunedoara, the hilly area of Moldavia, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Beiuş, The Upper

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[9] Elena Secoşan, Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*Festive Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 67.

Mureş Valley, Vrancea etc.) where peasant ornaments were most frequently made by crafting semi-precious metals: copper, brass, tin, bronze.

Among the areas mentioned above, Pădurenii Hunedoarei, one of the most archaic and original counties, is known for specialized craftsmen in the artistic processing of brass and tin. The local craftsmen would use an ancient technique to make a series of ornaments like chains, keys, rings, studs, pins for *ceapse*, the last being worn by the local women in a specific way to adorn their headdresses.

The supposition is possible that such ornaments – very similar to metal objects characteristic to the Dacian time – had as prototypes ornaments that archaeologists have discovered in the Dacian treasures buried on the territory of Romania.[10] Connected to long gone mentalities and beliefs (the fertility cult), these ornaments have lost their ancient meaning and their value has been reduced to that of decorative attributes and accessories of the women's costume.

In the north of the country (Moldavia and Transylvania) only the technique of making tin studs has been preserved. These studs were used to decorate the male leather belts, the clasps of the sheepskin coats and the disks on the wide shepherds' belts.

The engagement rings in the north of Moldavia (Bucovina) were made of semi-precious metals. These rings had a disk on which craftsmen would engrave geometrical motives like the concentric circles, the solar rosette and the asymmetric stars.

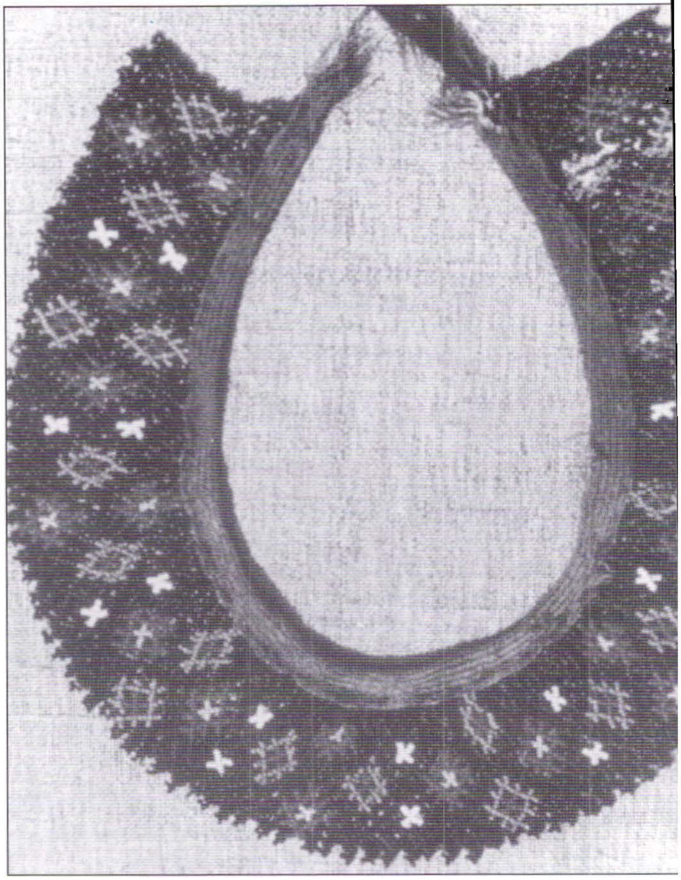
Ancient motives with symbolic content have been preserved in the tradition of ornamenting metal objects. The basic elements of these motives are: the point, the circle (reminding of the solar cult), straight or curved lines that are grouped in units that can suggest the tree of life. These decorative elements make up the basic fund of the plastic vocabulary which is common to the Romanian folk art in general.

The shape of the brass and tin objects was a result of archaic procedures, this fact certifying an ancient tradition of metal processing on the Romanian territory. The melted metal would be cast in clay and stone patterns and then the objects were taken out of patterns, rasped clean and ornamented by engraving and incising with simple, rudimentary tools.

The tin rings and *ceapsă* pins were decorated by encrusting them with colourful materials.

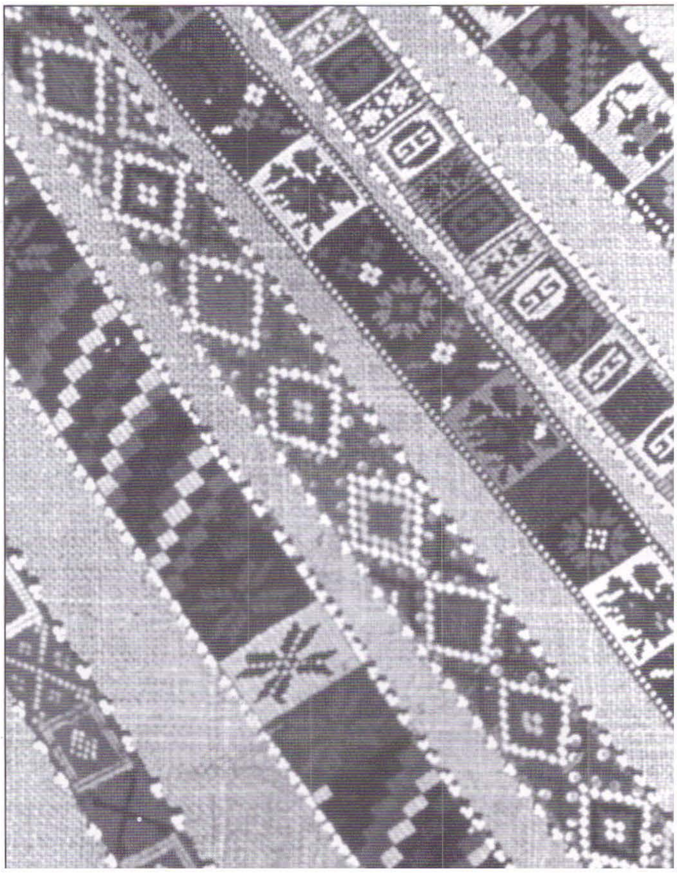
Beads were among the most frequent ornaments that women would wear at any age. They were made of the most diverse materials: stone, wood, bone, glass.

Little coloured beads were used to make the necklaces called *lătiţar*, *zgardă* or *zgărdan*, on which the polychrome



Zgărdan *made of beads (Bihor)*

Lătiţare *made of beads*



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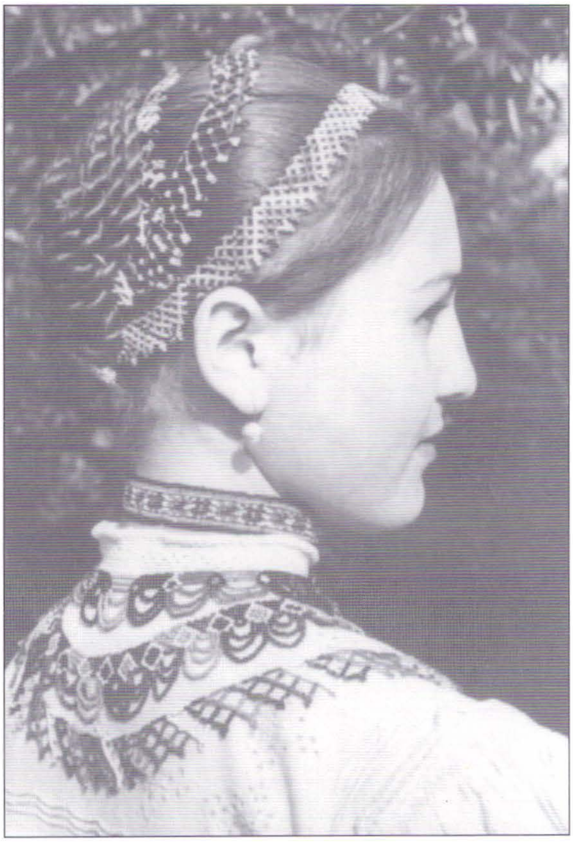
[10] Elena Secoşan, Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România (Festive Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 67.



Girl wearing bead ornaments – zone Codru

mainly geometrical patterns would bear different names: *zăluţă* (little link), *cârlig* (hook), *furcă* (pitchfork), *coarnele berbecului* (the ram's horns), *prescură* (communion bread), *roată* (wheel), *ciutură* (pit bucket).

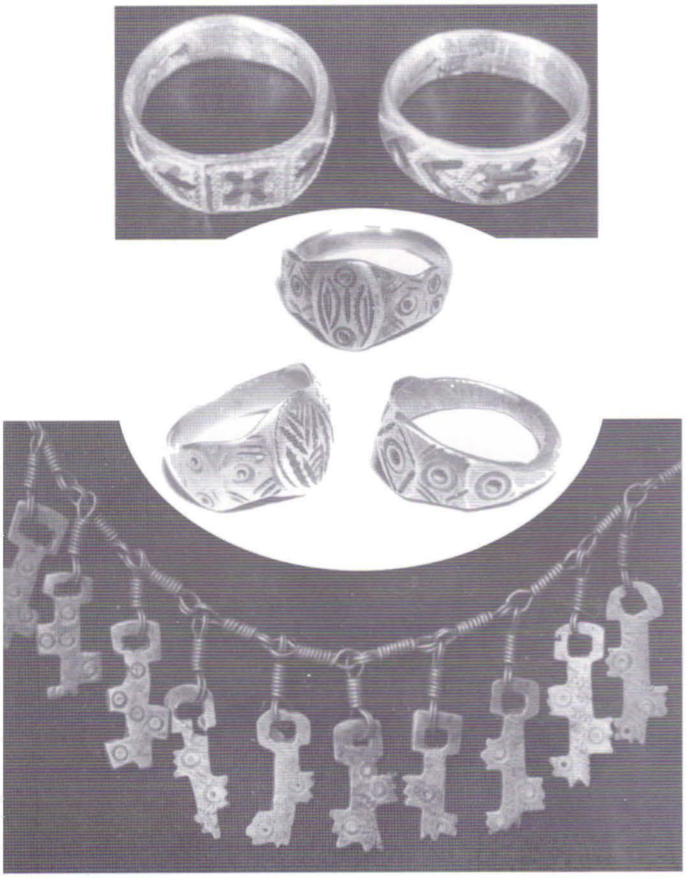
Irrespective of age, the women in the villages of the Maramureş district would decorate their holiday costumes with *zgărdane* of coloured beads, set on thread and intertwined artistically. The width of the *zgărdane* differs according to their ornamental pattern but also taking into account the age of the women. The old women wear thin, dark-coloured *zgărdane*, while the little girls would also wear thin but brightly coloured ones. The *lătiţare* have usually straight margins but in some areas, like Bucovina, Hunedoara and Bihor, the young girls and wives would wear wide and zigzagged *lătiţare*.

Unlike the brightly coloured *lătiţare* in the Maramureş district, the so-called *ghiordane* of the Bucovina villages (glass bead ornaments) are characterized by sober colours, dominated by ochre, black and dark brown. The light colours – white, red, green, blue etc. – are used only to reveal the contours of the decorative composition. The geometric ornamental motives are also predominant in this area, the most frequent being the lozenge, the S and Z shapes.[11]

Irrespective or their shape, the *lătiţare* have reached a chromatic and decorative harmony with the other component pieces of the female costume, amplifying its aesthetic value.

The refinement and decorative beauty of the peasant ornaments reflect the creativity and artistic skills of the folk craftsmen who also knew how to correspond to the tradition and taste of the local population, always taking into account the predominant ornamental motives that characterized a community in a specific period.

The Romanian craft and art of ornamentation is defined by a style derived out of the observation of the values of tradition that have crystallized in time.



Tin rings and keys
(Pădurenii Hunedoarei)

→

Woman from Pădureni wearing traditional ornaments

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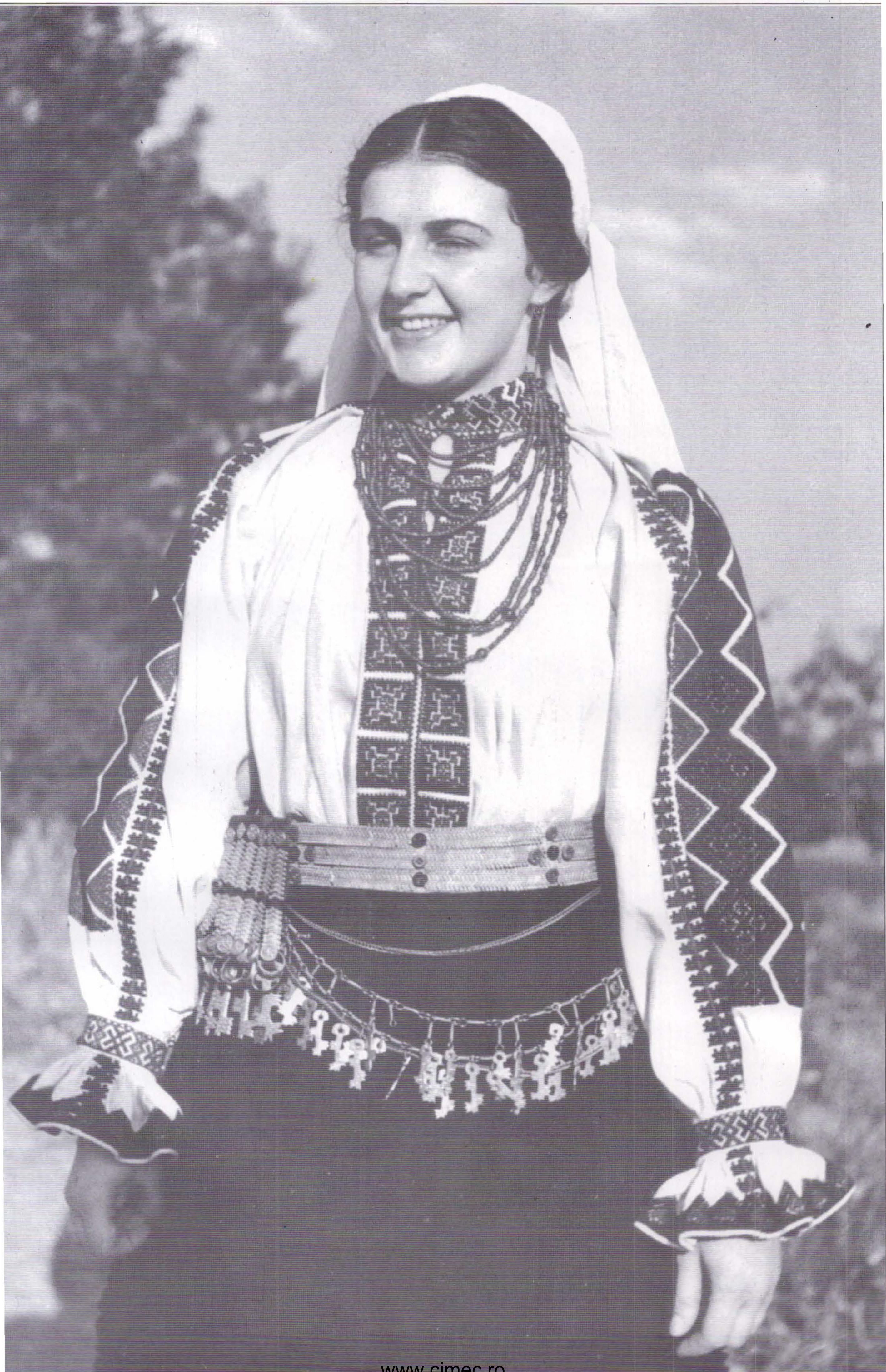
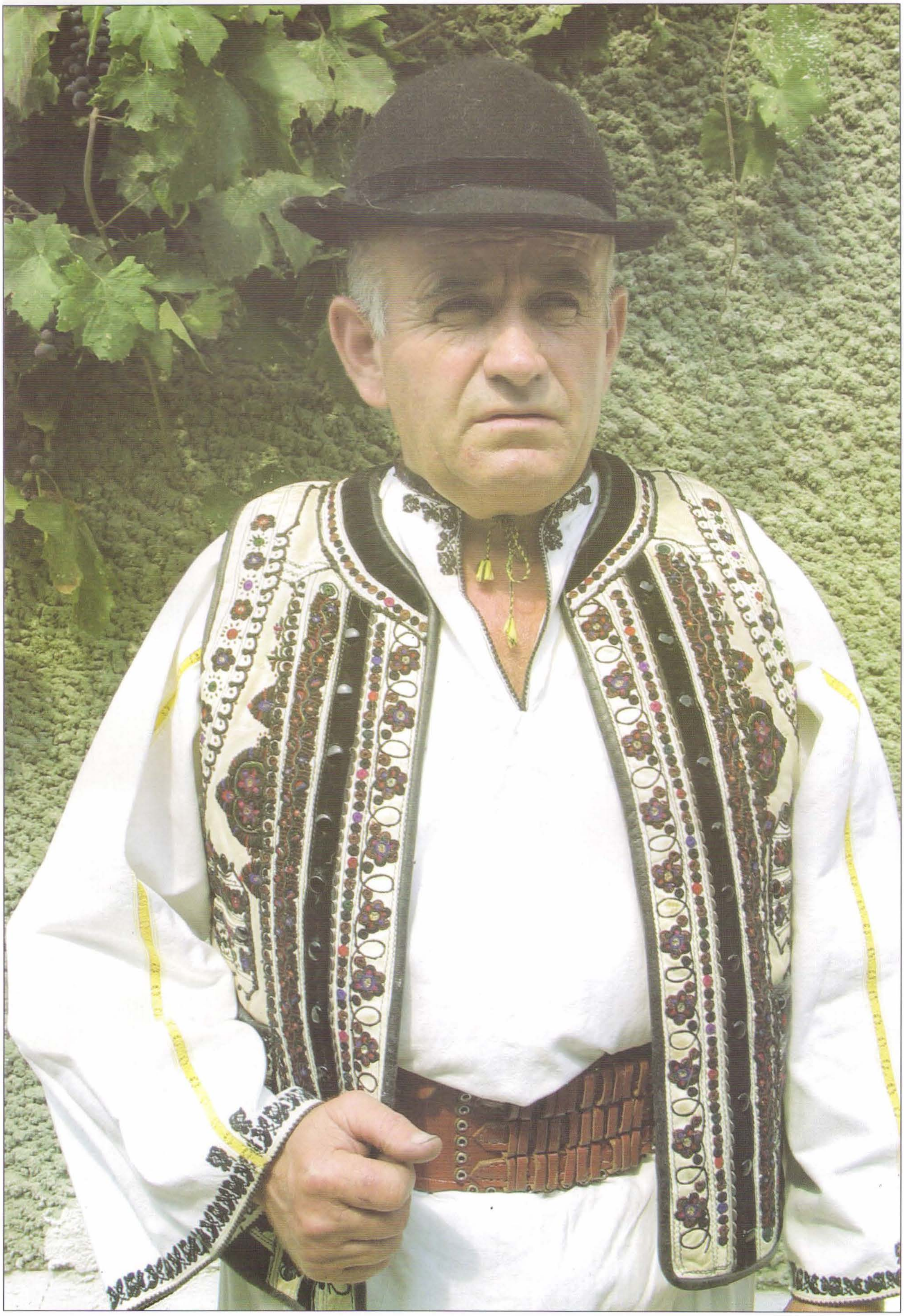
[11] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Arta populară bucovineană* (*The Folk Art of Bucovina*), p. 329.





The typology of the component pieces of the male folk clothing

As compared to the women's folk costume, the male costume is more unitary in point of morphology and decoration and it is characterized by a simple structure, which does not lack in elegance due to the discreet ornaments, grouped with refinement and taste and coloured in a sober but harmonious chromatic range.

The male folk costume has proved to be more conservatory than the women's costume, as many generations wore clothes that didn't look essentially different, because the costume had to be functional and perfectly adapted to the geographic environment and at the same time, it marked the occupation of its wearer, reflecting the close connection to practical life in a larger extent than the female clothing.

The Head Cover

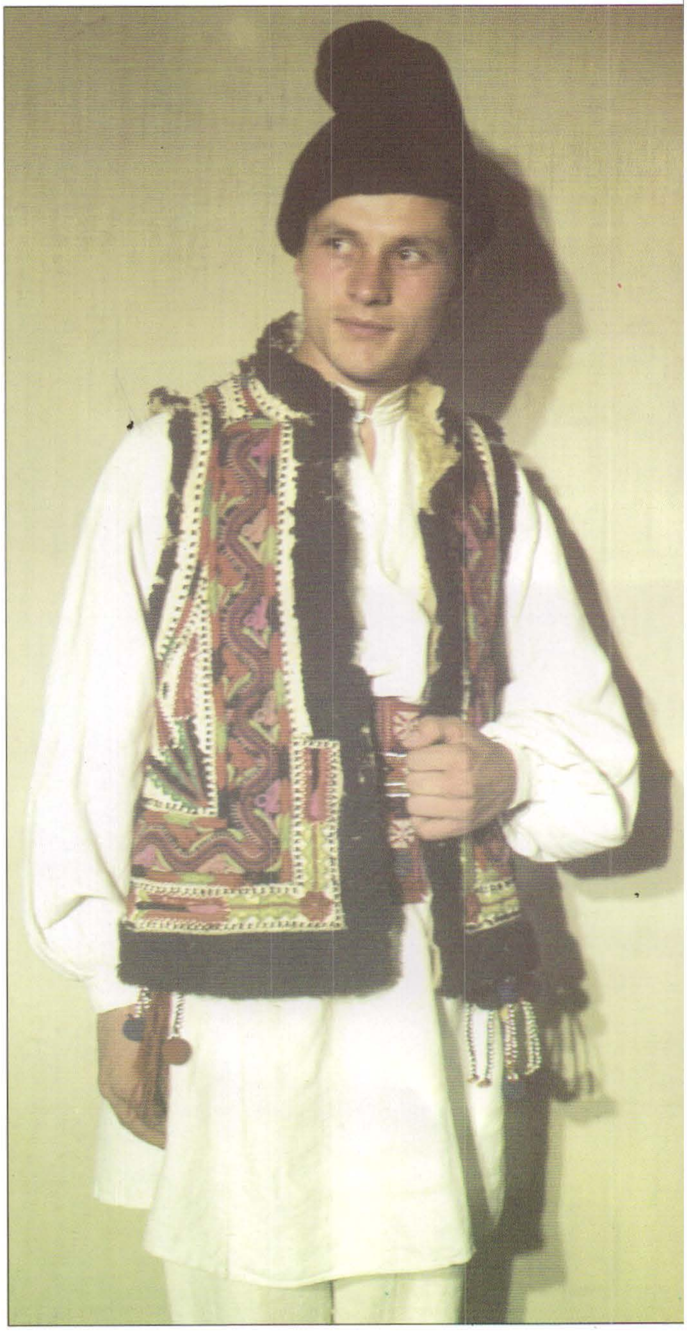
All over the country, men would cover their heads with caps (in the winter) and hats (in the summer) and these component elements of the male traditional costume have known numerous morphologic variants along the years, depending on the materials of which they were made, on the cut and the manner of wearing them.

Specialized craftsmen in every village would usually make the fur caps and straw hats, but sometimes peasants would make them themselves. The cloth hats were products of the manufacturing industry, but they were made according to the preferences of the people and to their local-zonal traditions.

The straw hats would be made in the household, but there were also specialized craftsmen who would design them in workshops.

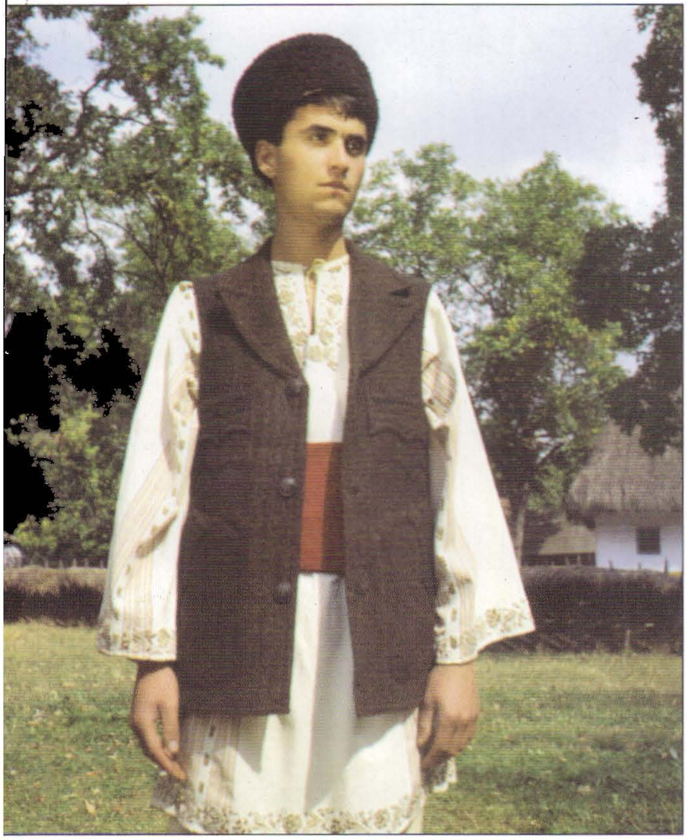
As well as the hair length and its manner of wearing, the shape and colour of the head covers held social significance in the past. For example, the gentry in the Land of Haţeg would wear their hair cut short, while the serfs (*iobagi*) would wear their long hair braided in two plaits that would begin from above the ears.

In order to distinguish themselves from the social category of the serfs, the gentry people would wear a cap of black lamb fur in the winter (black sheep were rarer), with a pointed bottom slanted to one side or flattened at the middle. The serfs' caps (*căiţe*) were white and black, with the bottom much larger than the brim.

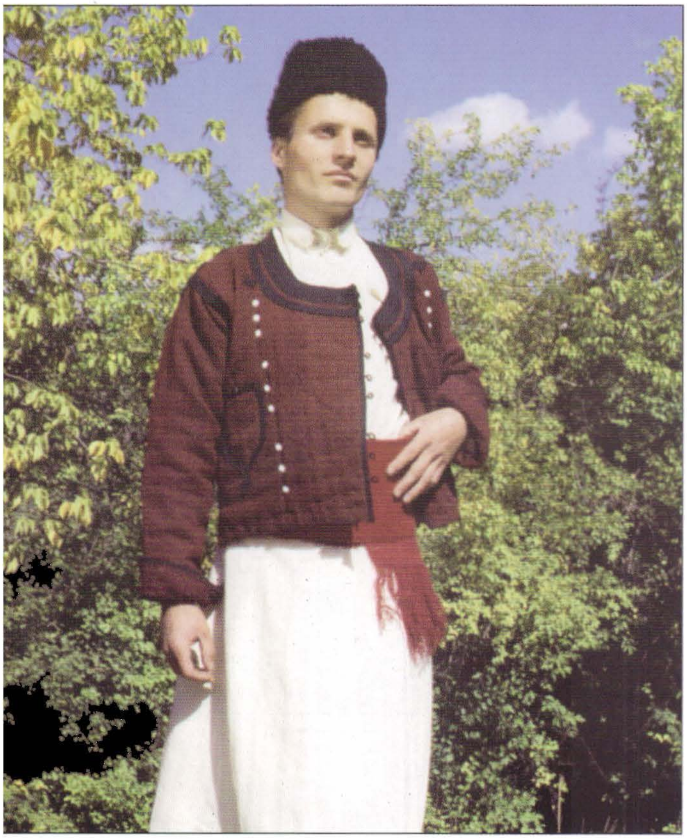


Man's folk costume with a peaked cap (Bacău)

← *Man wearing a shepherd's hat – Rucăr (Land of Făgăraș)*



Man wearing a flattened cap (Muscel)



Male folk costume with a flattened hat (Dobrudja)

The hat with wide, turned up brim used to be a distinctive mark of the gentry people. Only later, after serfs were freed, this type of hat was adopted in the peasant clothing, as a result of the wish to erase a symbol of the gentry's class.

The image of the gentry men, with their short hair under the fur cap with the pointed bottom slanted to one side, compared to the appearance of the serfs with their long hair calls to mind the representations of the Dacian nobles (*pileati*) and common people (*comati*) as they appear on the monuments of Antiquity, especially if we keep into account the fact that the Land of Haţeg was the centre of the Dacian state two millennia ago.

The cap is the oldest form of head cover in the male folk costume. It was made of sheep and lamb fur and rarer of goat fur.

According to shape and cut, there are several types of caps: the tall cap, called *pointed* or *tufted* (*ţuguiată* or *moţată*), the low cap (trimmed) and the *shepherd* cap (*mocănească*), which experts consider to be a variant of the trimmed cap.[1]

The tall cap, cut out of four pieces of fur sewn on the length, is spread on the largest area. More or less pointed, taller or smaller, the pointed cap changes its shape if it is arranged on the head differently. The manner of wearing it depends on the age of the owner and on the local-zonal traditions. Men can leave the bottom of the cap as such, make it look pointed, slanted to one side, flattened or pushed towards the back.

The low cap would be cut of two pieces: the round bottom and the brim which was sewn on the length by the bottom. The ancient variant of this type of cap would be made of one single piece. The low cap is a little taller in the districts Buzău, Vrancea, Prahova and it is very low in the Maramureş district.

As its name indicates, the *shepherd* cap was specific mainly for the pastoral population (in the areas Sibiu, Prahova, Vrancea, Argeş, Gorj, rarer in Vâlcea and Dobrudja). Its bottom would be larger than the rim and a shape like a cone section, slightly flaring, obtained by introducing little gores in the upper part of the cap.

The male cap is generally black, except for the white cap of Banat County, named locally *clăbăţ* (which was worn with the skin at the outside and turned up brim to display the fur) and the frost-grey cap specific mainly to the Moldavian costume.

The hat, the second basic head-cover for men, presents a series of morphologic variants, determined by the shape of the calotte but especially by the shape and dimensions of the rim, differently arranged from one zone to another, depending on the materials it was made (felt, straw) and on the local style.

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[1] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România* (*The Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 112.

The field data gathered for the *AER* questionnaire mention a rich local terminology for the rim of the hat: *corigă* (Cluj), *streaşină* (*eaves* – Iaşi, Vrancea, Argeş), *pânză* (*cloth* – Suceava, Ialomiţa, Mureş, Braşov), *gardină* (Bihor and Alba), *aripă* (*wing* – Suceava and Argeş), *marne* (Ialomiţa), *roată* (*wheel* – Vaslui), *buză* (*lip* – Dolj), *veşcă* (Sălaj and Alba), *părete* (*wall* – Sibiu), *obeţi* (Timiş).

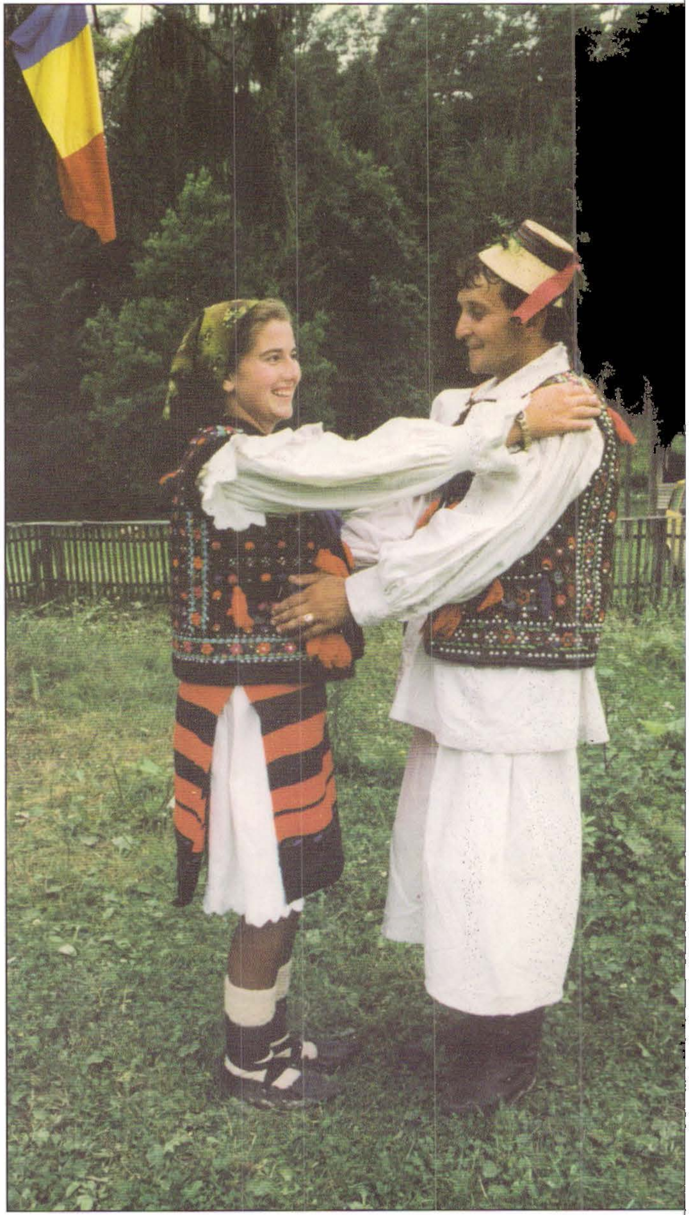
The rural commerce has contributed to the variety of models of hats, as different enterprises or guild craftsmen tried to sell their products. On the other hand, the trading of hats at fairs determined the spreading of different variants in many ethnographic zones of Romania.

Men would wear mostly black felt hats all along the year and naturally coloured straw hats were part of the summer clothing. As an exception, men in the zones Oaş and Maramureş would wear straw hats even in the winter, adorning them spectacularly on holidays.

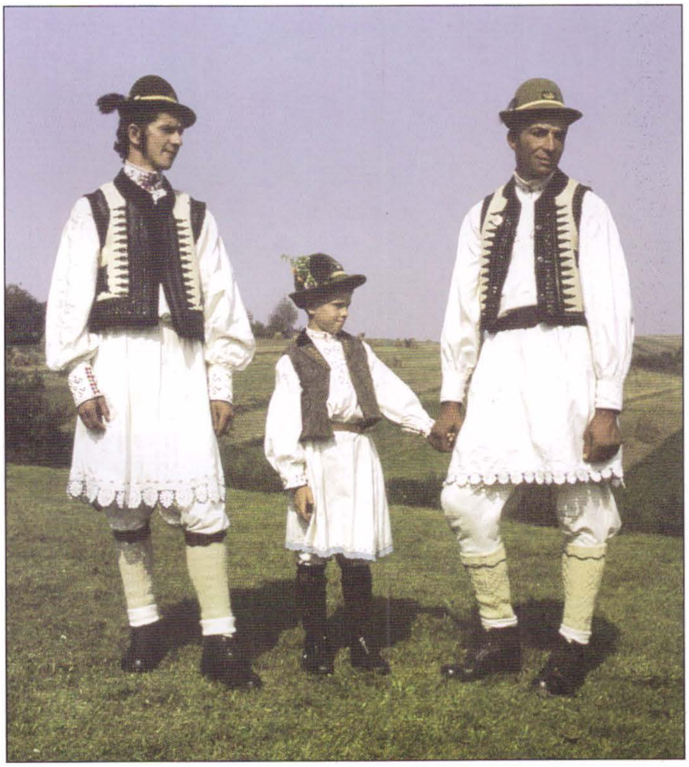
The caps and hats reflect the age and the local-zonal traditions of their owners, the young men displaying their handsomely adorned head covers with a certain pride, especially on holidays.

The Shirt

The shirt is a basic piece of the male costume, which has known a long time evolution. At local level, the morphologic variants of the shirt are determined by the



Straw hat with a folk costume of Maramureş



Three generations of men from Pădureni wearing hats (Hunedoara district) shape and manner of attaching the sleeves to the *stani* (body). the structuring of the body of the shirt. the shape. number and position of gores and the length of the shirt. The basic type. called straight shirt or "old men's shirt" has generated in time all the other variants: the long shirt with lateral gores. the shirt with *barburi*, the short shirt. the very short shirt. the short shirt with kilt (*fustanelă*) and the shirt with inset.[2]

The straight shirt has the same archaic cut of the female straight shirt: the *stani* and the sleeves are rectangular pieces united always at the shoulders.

The hemp. flax. wool. cotton and raw silk were the materials of which male shirts were made. The cloth was woven in the technique with two threads and it was simple ("clear") or with streaked warp (known as cloth *with frames*, *with margins*, *chirachie* etc.) obtained with thicker cotton filaments that stood out.

Holiday shirts were made of cloth streaked with raw silk or curly cotton. The laps of the shirt were one with the *stani* and the collar. a two inches straight band. was tied with tasselled strings at the neck slide.

The long shirt with lateral gores constitutes a first variant of the straight shirt and it was widespread all around the Romanian territory. The shirts were long down to the knees or a little shorter in the mountainous and hilly areas. while in the plain zones they were longer. even down to the ankles.

Depending on the shape and number of the lateral gores. the shirt was straight or flaring at the laps. The sleeves were cut out of a width (one and a half or even two widths) of a woven cloth in a similar way to the female shirt sleeves and they could hang down loose or could be tightened with thinner or wider wristbands called *pumnaşi*. A *pavă* was introduced under the armpit to enlarge the sleeve and ease the arm movements.

The shirt with barburi. specific to the pastoral population on both sides of the Southern Carpathians. has distinct features given by its eight gores: four lateral gores (two on each side of the shirt) and four triangular central gores: two in the front. intercalated in the middle of the front *stan* and two in the middle of the back *stan*. These back central gores. appearing as two united triangles in the shape of the letter M. are called *barburi* and give the name of this type of shirt.

The short shirt. with or without lateral gores. has been worn either with kilts (*fustanele*) and trousers or only with trousers.

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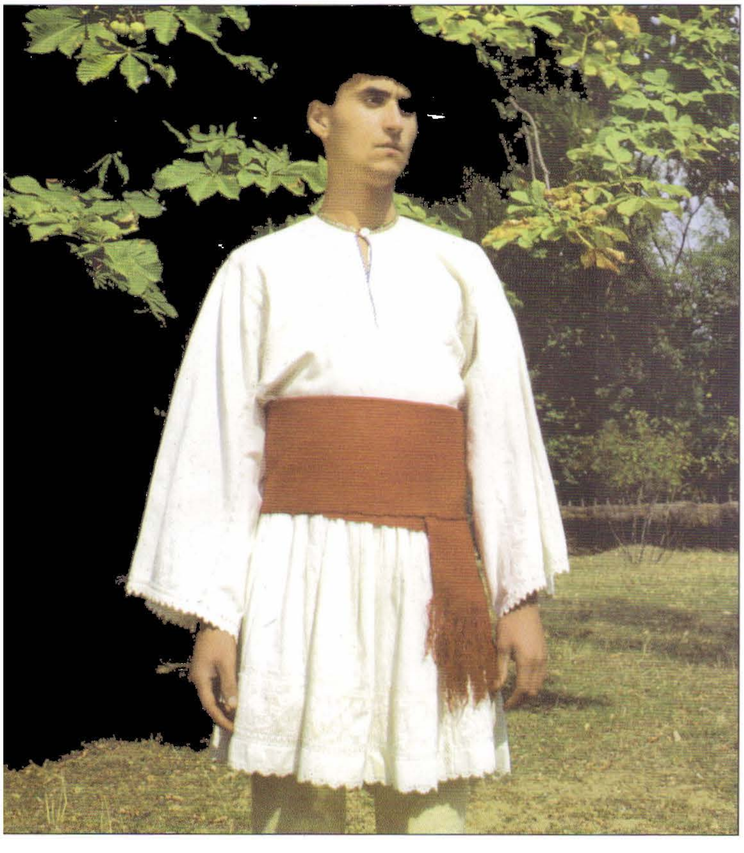
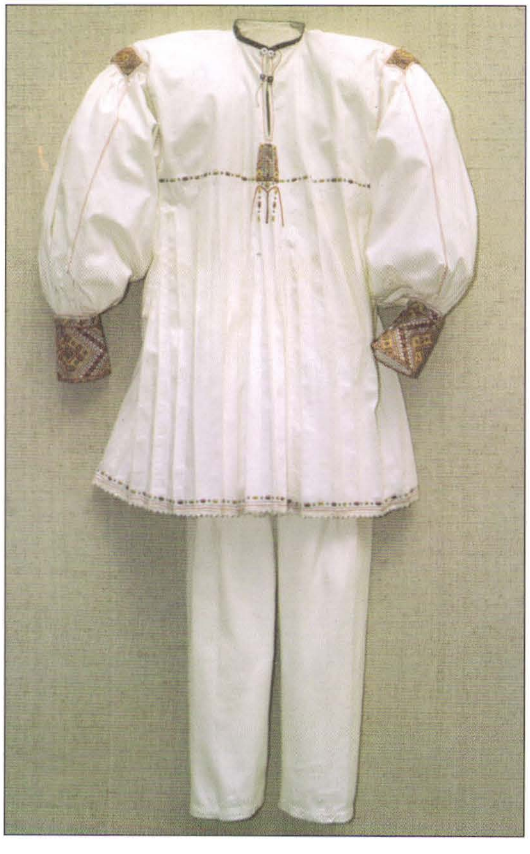
[2] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu. *Portul popular din România (The Folk Costume in Romania)*. pp. 50-51.



Straight shirt with lateral gores (Argeş)



Shirt with barburi from the Apuseni Mountains

The very short shirt[3] is a variant of the short shirt specific to the areas Maramureş and Land of Oaş and it has an original cut: the cloth is placed horizontally on its length and it is spread over the shoulders and arms, leaving half of the men's trunk bare. Later, a second sheet of cloth was attached to the first one, again horizontally and only as long as the *stani*. This type of shirt without gores was also spread in the space of Central Europe.

The short shirt with kilt (fustanelă). The laps of the shirt were separate from the *stani* in some areas like Moldavia, the curve of the Carpathians and the southern hilly settlements, and formed the so-called skirt or *fustanelă*, which was creased or densely pleated. As experts agree, the shirt with *fustanelă* which is part of the folk costumes of Macedonian-Romanians, Greeks and Albanese, has an Illyric-Thracian origin.[4]

The shirt with inset is a variant of the straight shirt which appeared under the town influence at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It replaced the straight male shirt in many zones of the country, as it was more suited for work.

The shirt with inset has two variants: with straight inset, collar around the neck and large sleeves with large margins; and the shirt with creased inset, turned up collar and the large sleeves tightened by cuffs.

For male shirts, decoration is applied on the collar, on both sides of the neck slide, along the shoulders and at the margins of the sleeves. The decorations are mainly geometrical motives sewn with hemp, linen, wool or raw silk thread.

Along the sewn ornamental motives, the artistic value of the shirt is enhanced by streaks of thicker white cotton woven in the warp on the length or by red dyed cotton thread streaks woven in the filling on the width or even by squares (*cadrele*) resulted out of the crossing of the warp and filling threads that constitute a decoration in the material.

The Trousers

The trousers, which are specific to the Romanian male folk costume, have evolved since their first archaic variants.

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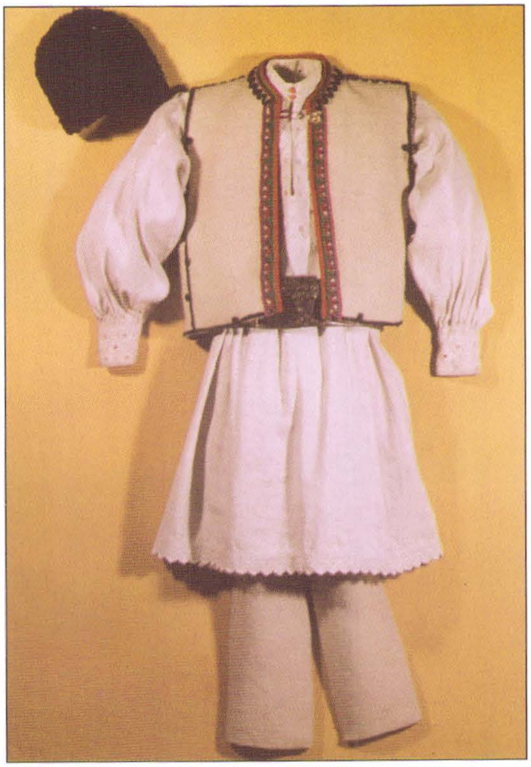
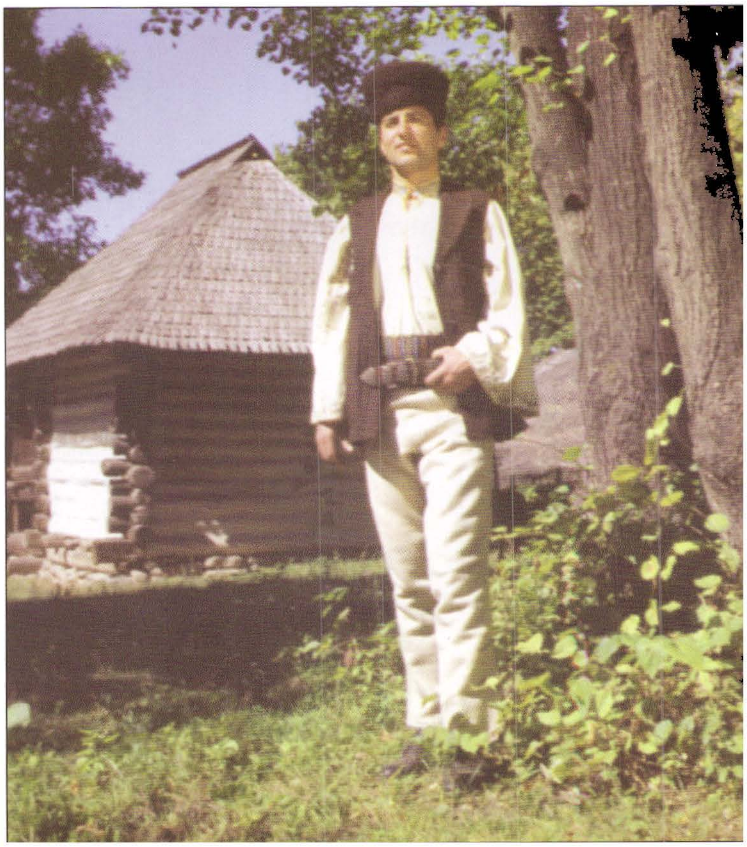
[3] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România (The Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 50.

[4] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Portul popular din regiunea Maramureş. Zonele Oaş. Maramureş. Lăpuş (The Folk Costume in the Maramureş Region. Zones Oaş. Maramureş. Lăpuş)*, p. 336.



Folk costumes with straight shirts and **cioareci**



The two main categories of trousers, for summer and for winter, are made of materials adapted to the season: hemp, linen and cotton for summer and woollen house-woven thick cloth for the winter. The winter woollen material is usually thickened by traditional procedures and has different names, according to the quality of the texture and to the zone: *pănură, cioarec, suman, zeghe, iţari, dimie, aba, postav, şiac* etc. Most times, the zonal terminology refers both to the material and to the costume piece made of it.

The summer trousers are: *iţari, izmene, gaci* and *trousers.*

The iţari, made of linen or cotton cloth woven by using a traditional technique (*în ozoare*), are characteristic for the Moldavian male costume and they can be concomitantly worn with *iţari* made of wool and cotton or of wool and linen.

The izmene (underwear), named with this term all over the country, refer to the costume piece for summer. They are of a straight or larger cut and they are made of hemp, linen or cotton.

The gaci, widespread in the north-west of the country, refer to the same type of summer trousers, but they are shorter and very large.

As for the winter trousers, men wear *cioareci*, made of a thick and dense woollen cloth, with a straight or tight cut and always white. Especially in Wallachia and Oltenia, the *cioareci* are called *nădragi*. Another type are the *iţari*, specific for Moldavia, made of a thinner cloth than the *cioareci*, still white but tighter. Men also wear house-woven dark coloured *trousers* of an urban cut.

There are also the thick house-woven trousers in dark colours: black, dark grey or dark blue. These trousers are very large in the upper part and tight below the knees, with a cut that resembles that of the Turkish *şalvari*. According to the zone, they are named with terms of Turk origin (*nădragi, poturi, ceacşiri, dimii*) and reflect the cultural contacts of the people in the south of the country with other peoples in the south-eastern European area.

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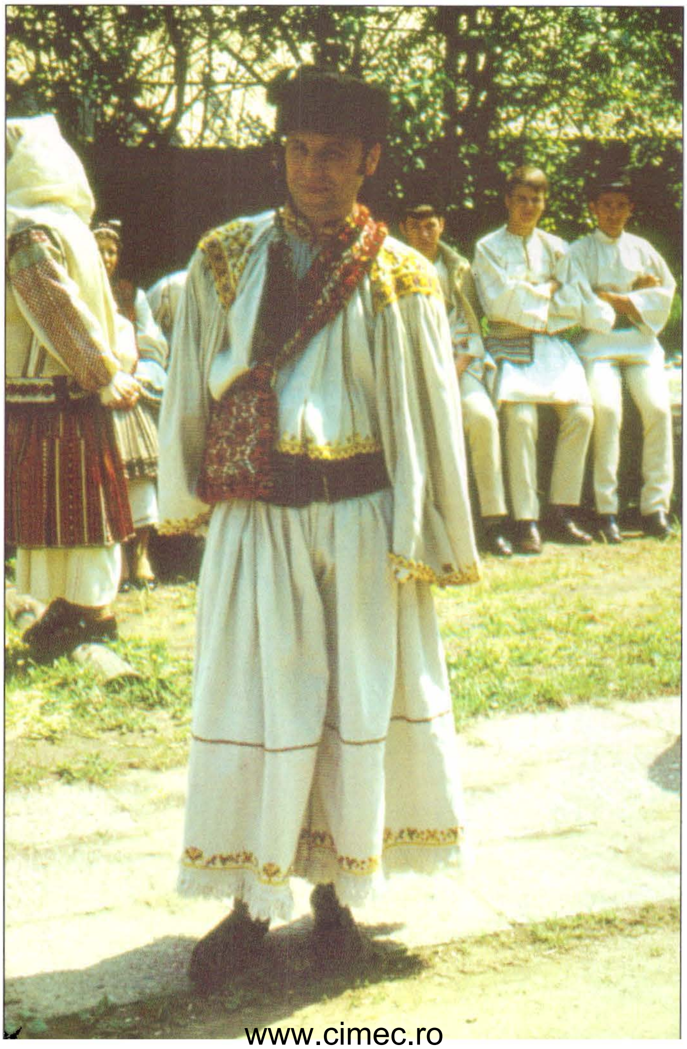
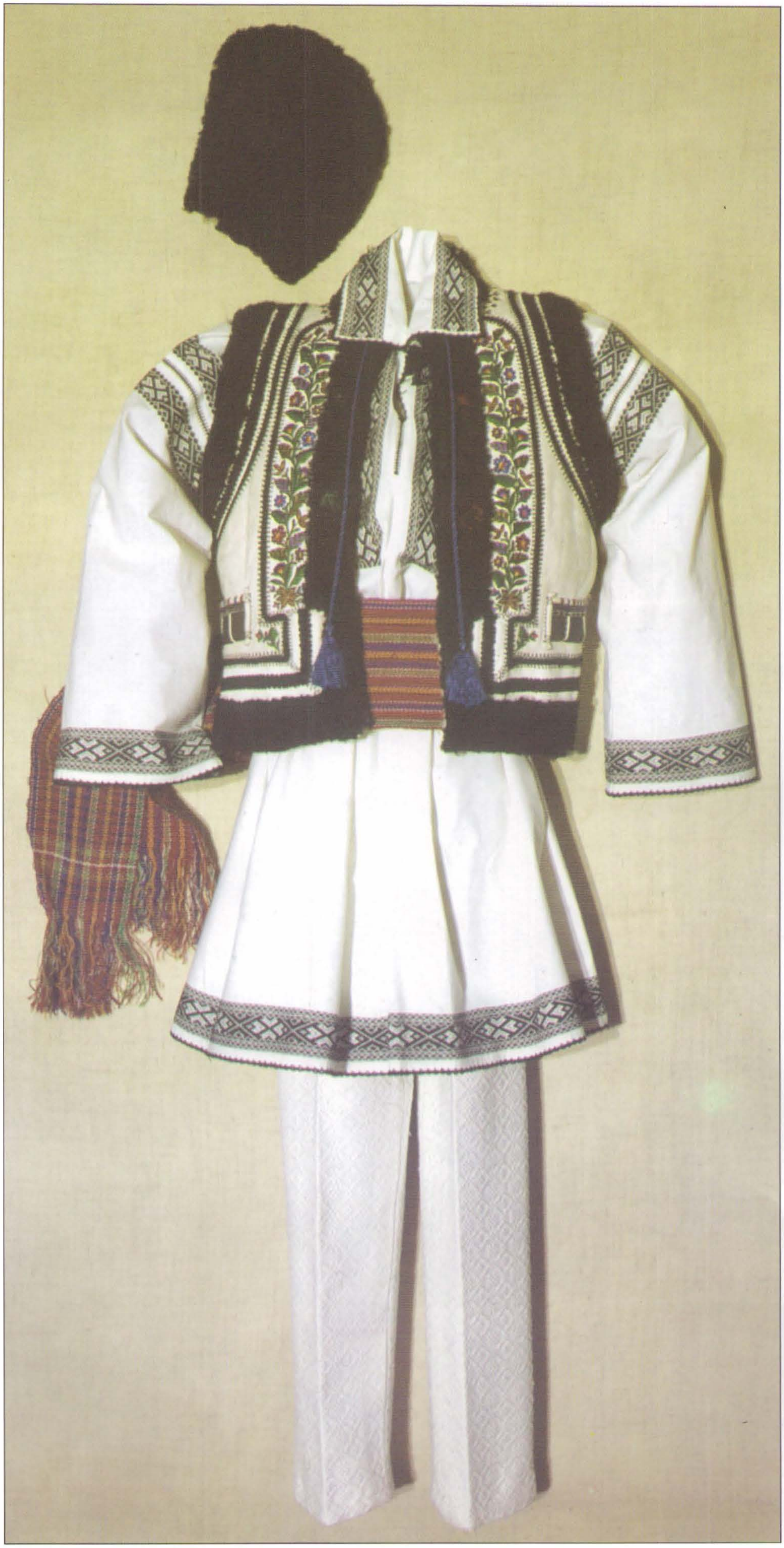
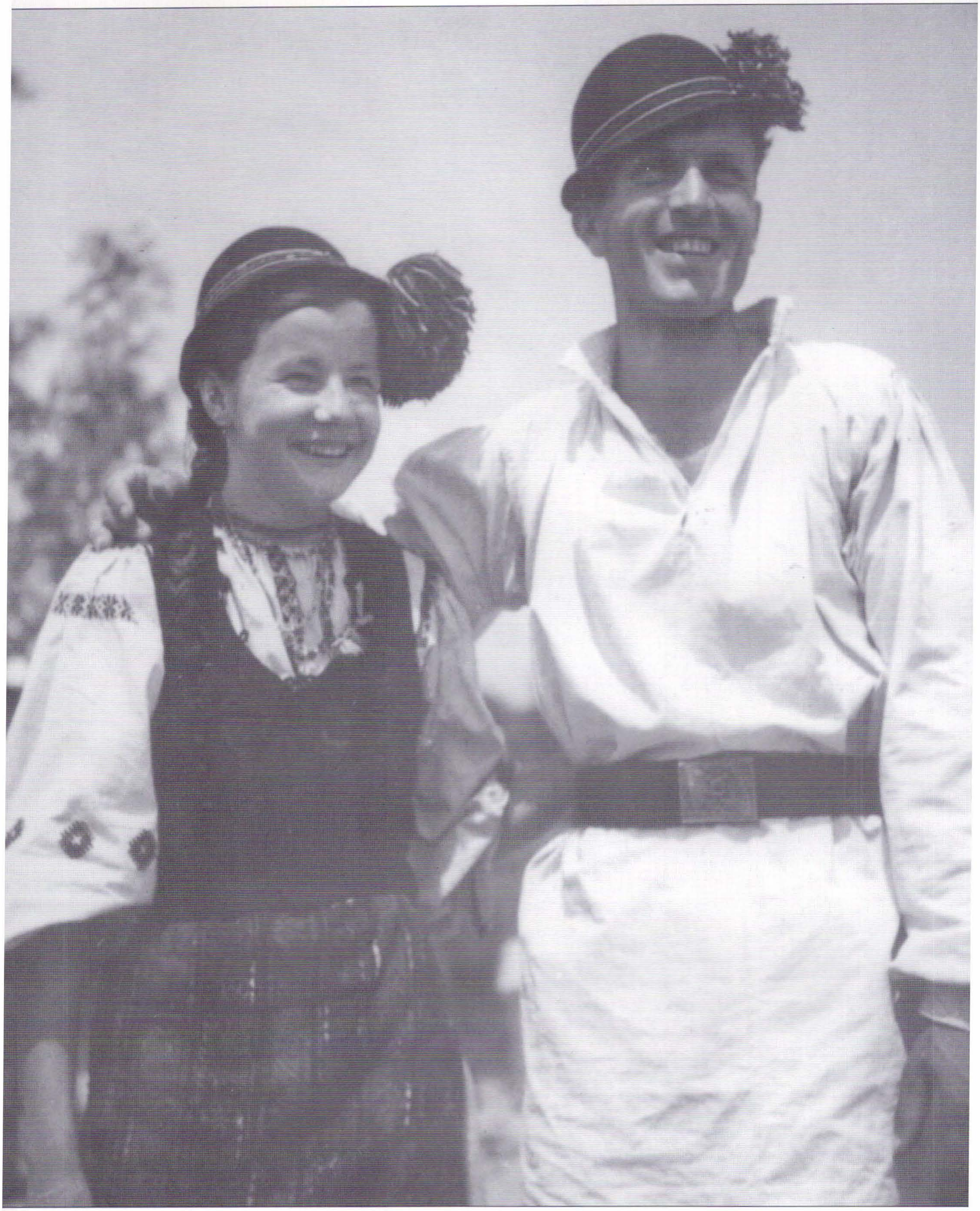
Folk costume with straight shirt and ***izmene*** *(Suceava district)*



Folk costume with short shirt and ***gaci*** *(Land of Oaş)*





– *Couple wearing hats ornamented with multicoloured woolen* ***pompoane***
(Drăguş – Land of Făgăraş)

The ornaments of the male costume

As in the case of the female folk costume, a series of ornaments and decorative accessories characterize the male folk costume, having different significances along time, ranging from magic value to symbol of social position, distinctive sign of age and occasion but also a means of making the wearer of the costume look nobler and more handsome.

Depending on the season, local traditions, material status but also on the creativity and taste of the youth, the ornaments, made of the most diverse materials, have differed from an ethnographic zone to another, especially by the combinations made of them.

Girls in many Romanian counties would observe the tradition by making themselves the ornaments for the head covers of their beloved young men.

On holidays, young men would adorn their caps or hats with natural and artificial flowers, peacock, pheasant, turkey, cock or jay feathers, multicoloured silk ribbons, golden metallic thread, cords braided of threads in many colours, colourful silk or wool tassels, mirrors, ornamented handkerchiefs but mostly *lăţiţare* (bands) of small coloured beads, all these decorations signifying manhood and flourishing vitality.

Quite often, on great holidays, at weddings or religious popular festivities (*nedei*), the ornaments were combined in complex "dress-ups" that amplified the aesthetic aspect of the whole costume.

The young men in the Avrig area (Land of Olt) would adorn their head covers with tassels and *barşoane* (coloured *lăţiţare*), those from Bihor, with natural flowers, basil, artificial flowers, cock and pheasant feathers; those from Perşani area (Land of Olt) with ribbons, multicoloured braided cords, golden metallic thread, polychrome tassels and natural flowers.

The custom in the Avrig area would require that the young men enlisted for the army should mark their status by wearing a big peacock feather *vâstră* until recruiting.

In the auriferous zone of the Apuseni Mountains, young men and bridegrooms would assert their prestige by ornamenting the calottes of their thick felt hats with precious decorations made of gold thread.

The young men of Năsăud would wear the most adorned hats on holidays. Their hats were decorated with two or three coloured bead bands (*bertiţe*). On the right side of each hat a *peacock feather* was fixed, made of five or six rows of peacock feathers (containing up to 500 feathers). Only specialized local craftsmen knew how to make such feather-decorations and usually only the wealthier people could afford to order them.

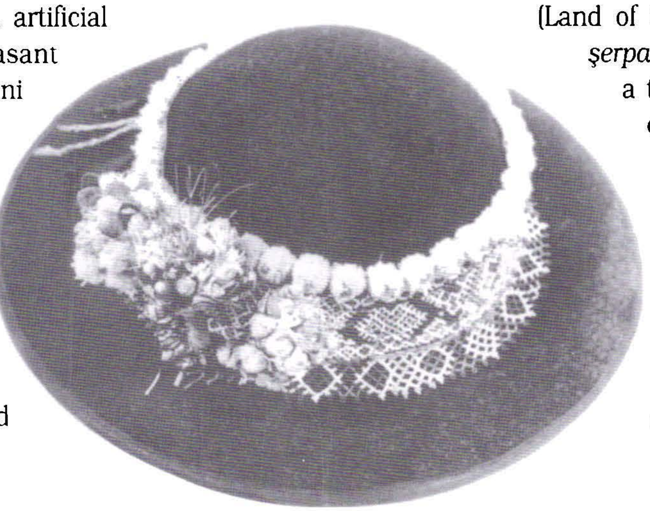
The leather belts are another decoration of the male folk costume.

The wide leather belts (*chimir* or *şerpar*) were used at first in Transylvania, but then men across the Carpathians started to wear them instead of their house woven belts.

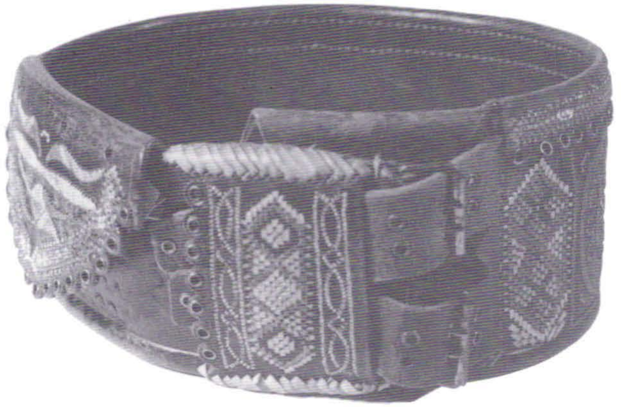
The *chimir* made of cattle skin (*toval*) has become gradually more aesthetic due to its ornamentation obtained by different techniques: pattern stapling; embroidery with coloured leather strands; embroidery with metallic thread or tinsel; embroidery with beads; studding.

For example, the belts of young men would be stapled with solar motives in various combinations and decorated with big brass disks.

The young men in the Perşani area (Land of Olt) would associate their *şerpar* (a wide leather belt) with a thinner and very long belt, circling their waist twice so as a 35 centimetres long piece of belt would hang loose on one of their hips. Their belt,



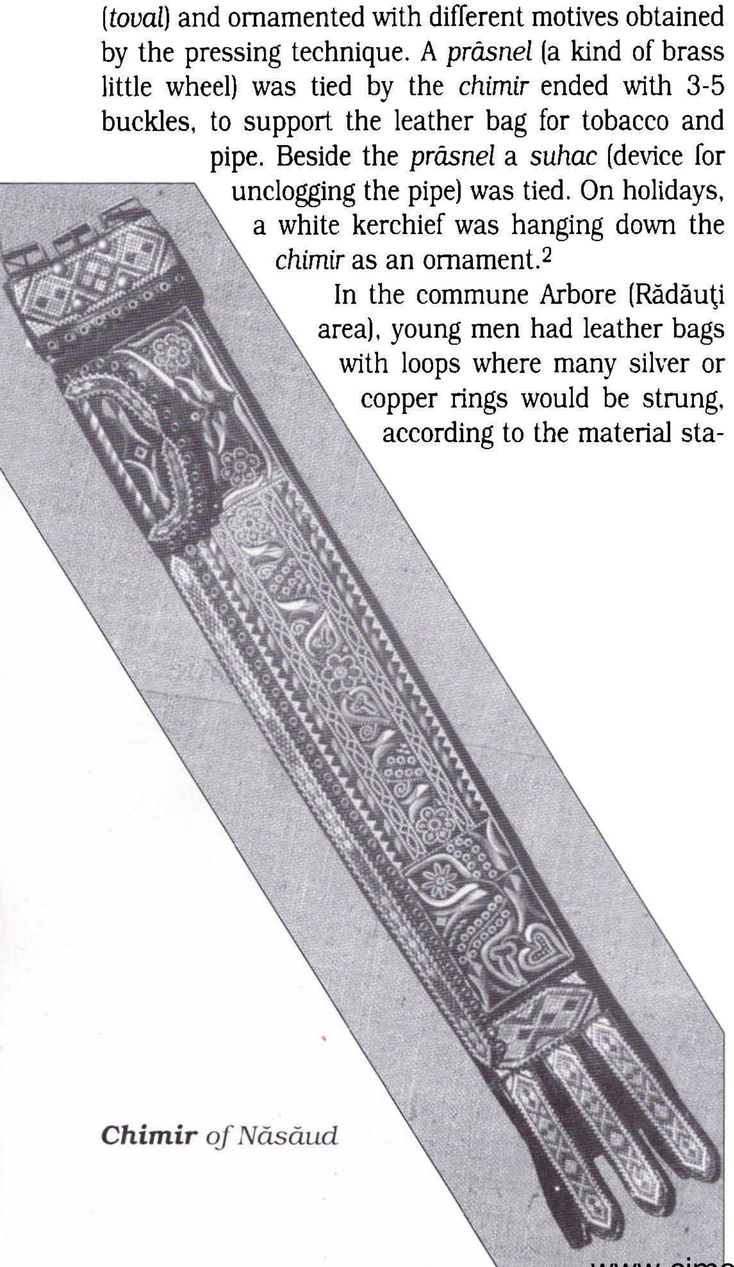
Hat of Lăpuş adorned with ***zgărdane***



Chimir *with decorative motives embroidered with coloured* ***irhă*** *(Sibiu)*

named "belt with buttons" (*curea cu bumbi*)[1] would be decorated with big brass buttons on three rows, forming a fish-scale pattern.

The *chimir* (also called *belt*) in the Rădăuţi area (north of Moldavia) would be made of tanned leather (*toval*) and ornamented with different motives obtained by the pressing technique. A *prâsnel* (a kind of brass little wheel) was tied by the *chimir* ended with 3-5 buckles, to support the leather bag for tobacco and pipe. Beside the *prâsnel* a *suhac* (device for unclogging the pipe) was tied. On holidays, a white kerchief was hanging down the *chimir* as an ornament.[2]



Chimir *of Năsăud*

In the commune Arbore (Rădăuţi area), young men had leather bags with loops where many silver or copper rings would be strung, according to the material status of the young men. When one of them got married, his future wife could choose the most beautiful of these "bag-rings".[3]

Men in almost all of Moldavia would wear woollen girdles (*brâie*) associated to tin studs or to copper buttons.

The young men in the Transylvanian plain would wear *chimire* adorned with *prâsnele* and brass disks artistically made by local craftsmen.[4]

The men in Ţara Bârsei would wear a 3-4 metre long belt, called *praşchie* and decorated with copper buttons.[5]

The wide *şerpar* used as a belt by the men in the Land of Olt was ornamented with stapled patterns and motives sewn with coloured leather strands.[6] The examples could go on.

Another category should be added to these ornaments, the category of hunting emblems, made of gunpowder horns and hunting bugles.

The young men of Şieuţ (Bistriţa-Năsăud district) would not go to the winter evening work and entertainment meetings without wearing their copper hatchets.[7]

According to the field data gathered for the *AER*, there were also local decorative accessories specific to the passage rites: the *wooden botă*, ornamented and adorned with multicoloured ribbons (Hunedoara), the *young man's axe* (Caraş-Severin), the *stick* by which a handkerchief folded in the shape of the bird was tied (Bacău), the *wedding hammer* and the leather bag "with lid" (*ţaşca*) (Suceava).

The ornaments on the ceremonial folk costumes reflected the young men's need of prestige and self-assertion, conferring them elegance and distinction.

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[1] Cornel Irimie, *Portul popular din zona Perşanilor. Ţara Oltului* (*The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. The Perşani Zone*), p. 16.

[2] Maria Cioară, *Zona etnografică Rădăuţi* (*The Ethnographic Zone Rădăuţi*), pp. 110-111.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 111.

[4] Elena Secoşan, Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*Festive Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 146.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 149.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 150.

[7] Informer Ioana Socaciu, aged 72, Şieuţ, Bistriţa-Năsăud district.

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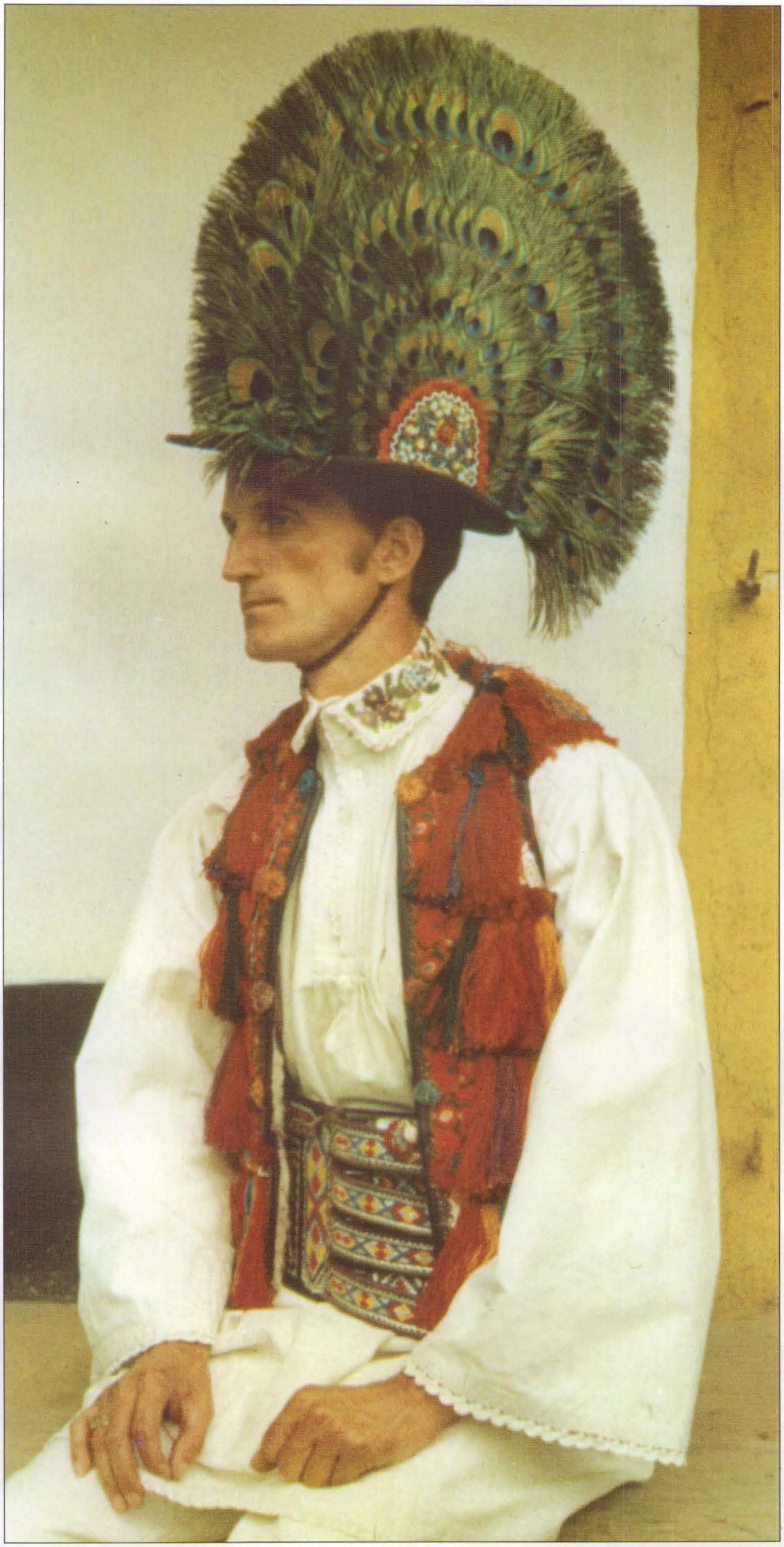
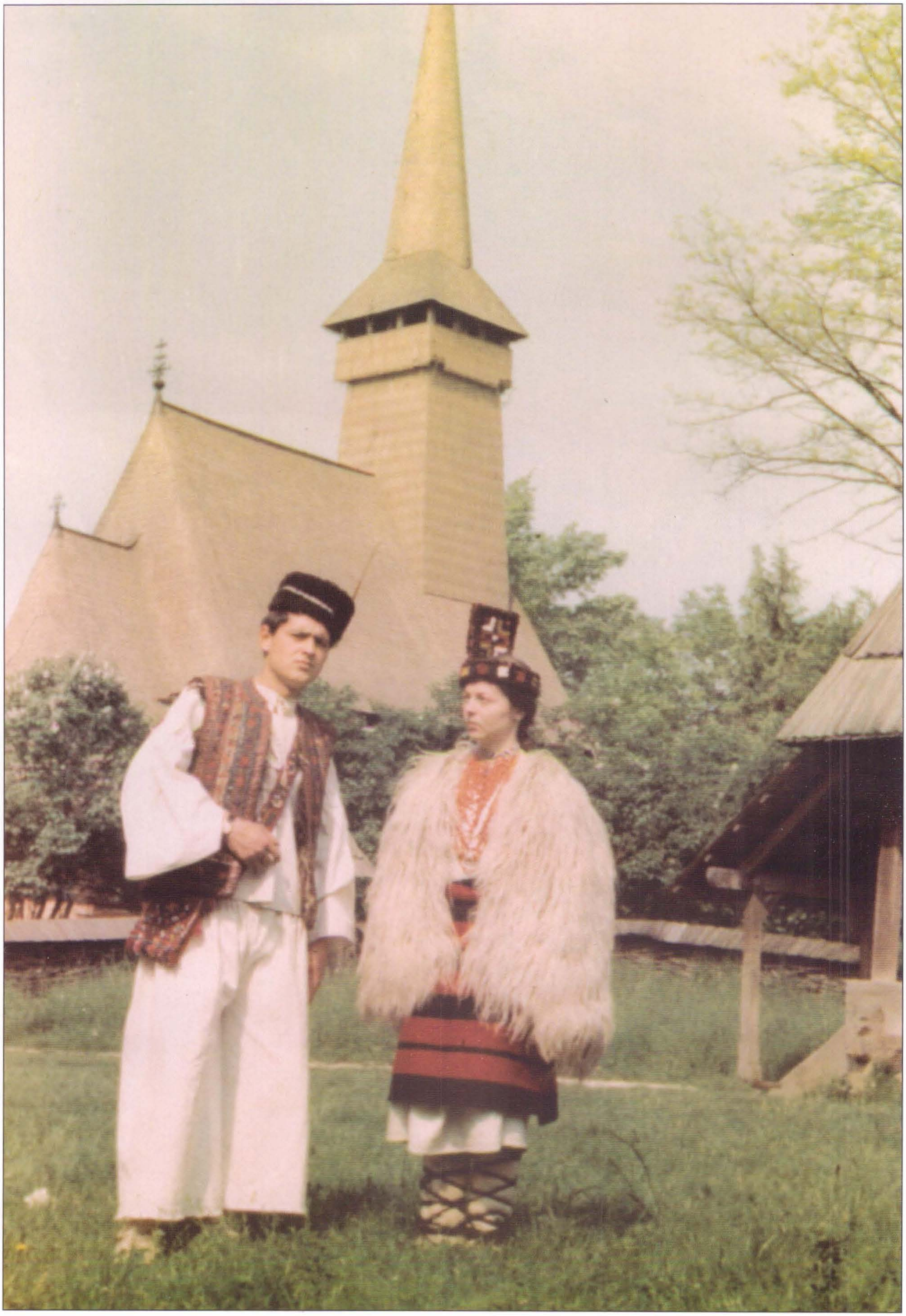
Young man wearing a peacock "wheel" at his hat





Common pieces of the female and male folk costumes

There are a series of common pieces of the male and female folk costumes, among which girdles have and important role.

Besides their practical function of fastening the waists of people who used to carry heavy burdens and to fix the costume pieces that cover the body from the waist down, the girdles have also artistic value, generating a range of zonal variants classified according to material, technique, decorative and chromatic composition, dimensions and manner of wearing.

The tying of girdles, by a knot with loose ends or with the ends folded or hidden in the overlapping parts of the girdles, according to the local tradition and the taste of the people, confers personality to the folk costume in a certain area, making it unique.

The brâie are part of the girdles woven of animal fibres (wool), sometimes associated with vegetal fibres (hemp and more often cotton). People wrap the *brâie* more than once around their waists and this type of girdle has the largest area of circulation. At first, craftsmen would make the *brâie* of wool in natural colours, white or grey and then the red *brâie* became common in all the ethnographic zones of Romania.

Unlike the *brâie*, the **bete** are thinner and longer and have a more pronounced decorative role due to their rich ornamentation.

At first, the woven girdles – *brâie* and *bete* – were not ornamented, as they were purely useful pieces of costume. On the other hand, the female *brâie* would be covered by the pieces worn over the laps of the shirt and these pieces were fastened around the waist with *bete*. Men would also circle their waists with *bete* or leather belts over the *brâie*.

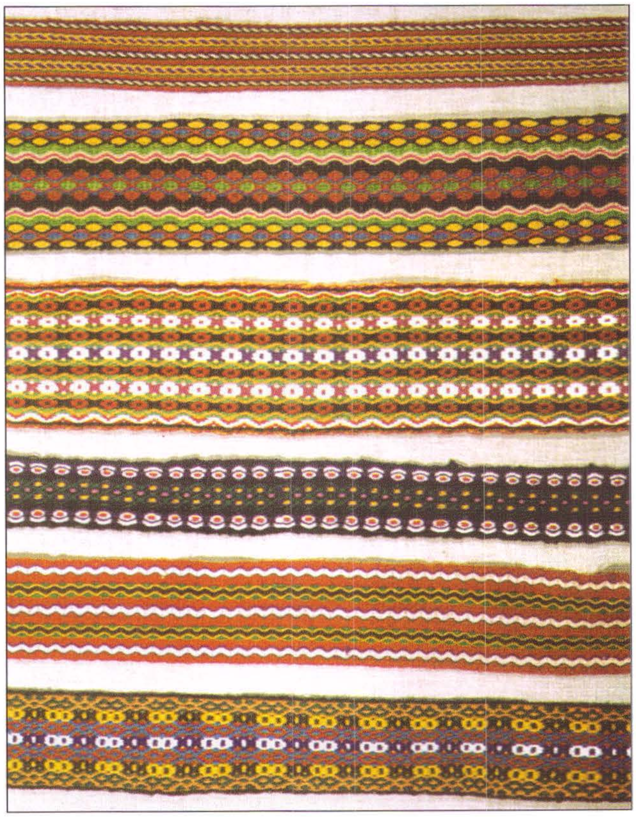
The characteristic ornament for the woven girdle used to be the stripe along or across the girdle or both along and across the costume piece, at one end (the visible one, placed over the other) or at both ends, case in which the decorative patterns would be different, as the girdle could be worn alternatively with one of the two ends over the other.

The decorative composition of other variants of girdles was also based on stripes and it was amplified in time by alternating the stripes with geometric, stylized vegetal, bird-shape, zoomorphic and even anthropomorphic motives woven by using special techniques, "with the hand" or "with *spetează*".

The decoration of the woven girdles was further increased by using (in some areas in Moldavia, Wallachia and Oltenia) of beads strung on the margin threads of the warp or by ending the *brâie* with fringes made of the ends of the warp threads and the *bete* with tassels and multicoloured woolen balls.

All over the country, the most widespread were the unornamented girdles and then the girdles with alternating stripes of different colours and great diversity.

The next frequent type of girdles is the one decorated over its entire surface by stripes alternating with ornamental motives.



Girdles and ***bete*** *(Oltenia)*

← *Woman wearing a* ***gubă*** *– a common costume piece for the Maramureș area*

The girdles with striped ornaments at both ends and those with stripes alternating with other motives and placed at one extremity or the other were not so frequent.

We should also note the three-coloured *brâu*, which was a symbol of the Romanians' fight for their national unity (the national colours on the Romanian flag are red, yellow and blue) and which people in folk areas of Transylvania and Banat would wear frequently.

*The **short belts (cordoane)*** of the most diverse materials - beads, leather, metal, industrial textile fibres - are girdles that encircle the waist only once and they were not very frequent as parts of the Romanian folk costume.

Marking the waist, the girdles split the costume into two distinct components, harmonizing at the same time the whole costume pieces by their adjusted decorative and chromatic structure.

Another common costume piece for both men and women is the footwear with specific zonal characteristics according to the geographic and climatic conditions, to the economic type of settlements and to the occupation of the people.

A series of woven or knitted woollen, cotton or hemp pieces - named *obiele, cioareci* or *ciorapi* (*stockings*) - wrapped the calves of the legs, associated to the *opinci*.

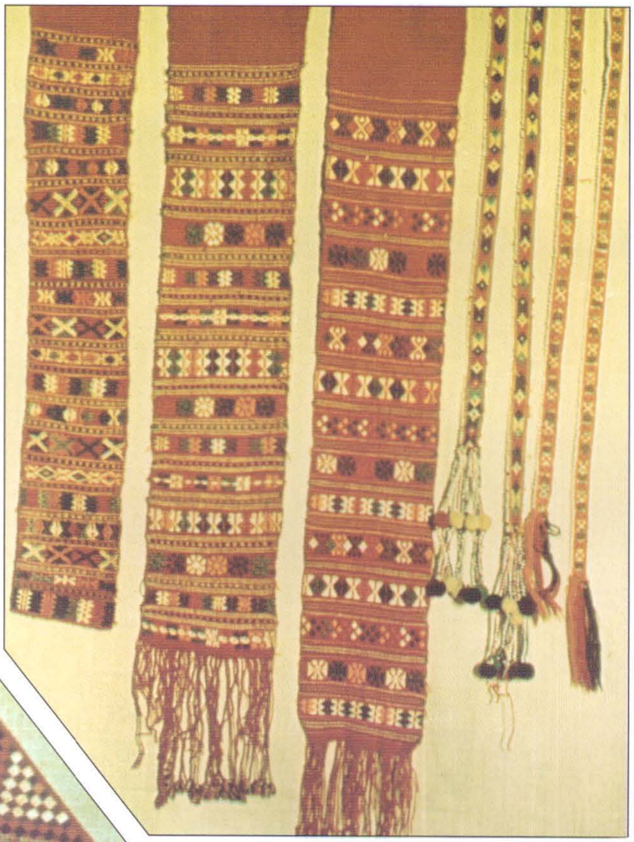
The ***obiele*** (leggings) were rectangular textile pieces that wrapped the calves and they were made of thickened wool cloth (*pănură*). They were ornamented with streaks or squares made by inserting coloured threads in the warp and in the filling and by crossing them. The different colours of *obiele* and the way they were wrapped around the calves marked the age and the zone of provenience of a person.

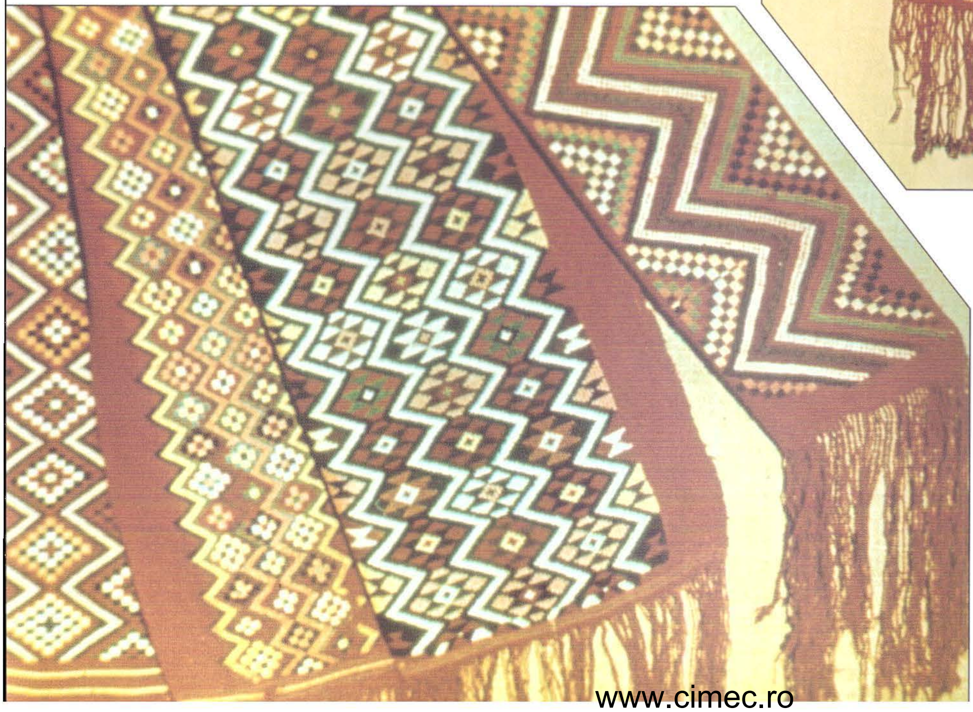
The ***cioareci*** were made of *pănură* and cut cylindrically, as stockings are. They were long up to the knee or longer and fixed with knitted "bindings" and mostly women would wear them in the cold season. As they didn't dress the feet, the *cioareci* were associated to the *obiele* or woollen stockings.

The ***toloboni***, specific to the winter costume in the mountain areas, were made of thick and dense woollen woven material and unlike the *cioareci*, they covered the legs entirely, as some high boots of thick felt.

The ***opincă*** (leather sandal with straps) is the first traditional footwear piece of peasants, who would wear *opinci* in all seasons, as they were perfectly adapted to every clime and type of land.

The *opincă* is widespread in large cultural areas, but especially in Europe and is cut of a single rectangular piece of processed pig or cattle skin. There are several types of *opinci*, according to the way the top of the leather piece (called *gurgui*) is tightened, the dimensions and position of this *gurgui*, the shape of the heel, the manner of tying the straps etc.





Girdles specific for Wallachia ↑
and Moldavia ↙

Under the town influence, the types of folk festive footwear have gradually included crafted pieces like boots (low and high), shoes and slippers.

In the cold season, the female and male folk costumes would be completed by thick overcoats made of woollen cloth (*sumane*) or of sheepskin and fur (*pieptare* – waistcoats and *cojoace* – sheepskin coats).

The harsh climate imposed the frequent use of woollen cloth and of furs that were processed within the peasant households and then by the specialized craftsmen.

The ***suman***, with form, decoration, chromatic and name varying from one zone to another, has been made of natural coloured wool (white, black, grey), woven at home in the technique of the four threads and then processed traditionally for making it thicker.

In the plain areas, where there were no rivers to activate the traditional installations (*pive*) for processing textiles, an archaic technique was devised, called "beating at the grates" or "beating at the elbows", "at the *lesă*" or "at the hand".

This technique required a rudimentary installation made of eight poles thrust into the ground that supported a kind of grill made of intertwined willow or reed rods and having the dimensions of 100 centimetres (width) over 200 centimetres (length). Nearby, a cauldron with water was heated in open air. The craftsmen (*abagii*) would introduce the cloth into the warm water and then they would stretch it on the grill and beat it. While the cloth was being beaten "at the grates", it was permanently sprinkled with warm water. The obtained cloth was stretched immediately and tightly folded around a wooden pole. After two days, the cloth would be unfolded and dried in the sun.[1]

As a result of such processing, the textures would become thicker and denser, getting resistance and waterproof qualities.

The *suman* is cut like a *poncho* (a straight tunic), with the body and sleeves made of rectangular pieces, longer than the knees and following the body lines and giving it a vertical aspect.

The archaic forms of the *suman* lacked collar and gores but then, to confer elegance and amplitude to

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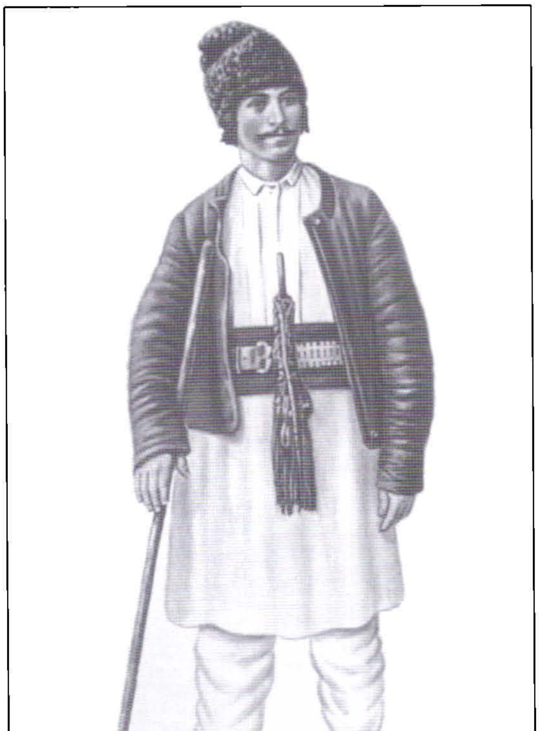
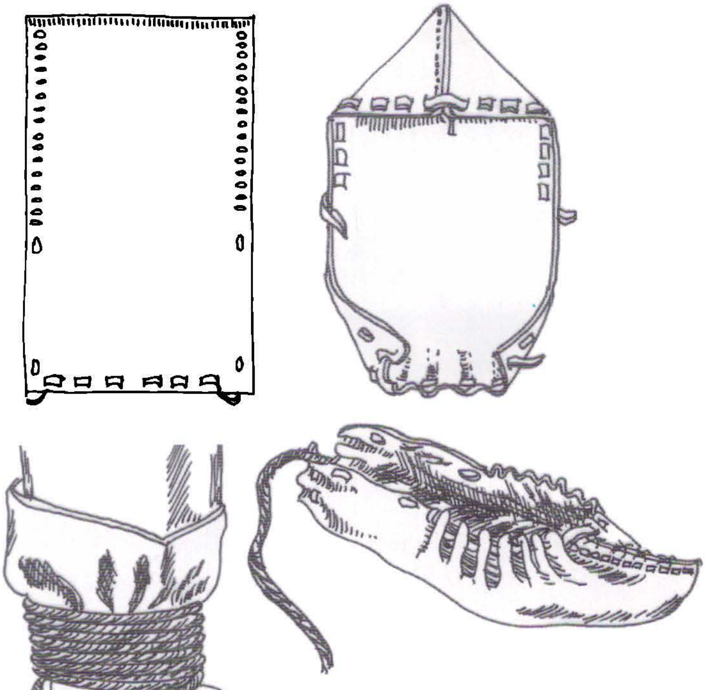
[1] Maria Cioară-Bâtcă; Vlad Bâtcă, *Zona etnografică Teleorman* (*The Teleorman Ethnographic Zone*), p. 77.



*Bessarabian peasant wearing leggings and **opinci***



The manner
of crafting the male
***opincă** in Banat*

this costume piece, the folk creators resorted to lateral gores, initially rectangular and then oblique, with the sharp top under the armpit. The gores would be attached to the tubular sleeves by large trapezoid pieces (*pave*) that eased the movements of the arms.

The long frieze coats were mainly adorned with strings of different names (the most frequent were *sarad* and *bârnaş*), made in the peasant household. Other ornaments were *passement* (plaited strings of woollen, cotton or silk threads) or pieces of coloured industrial cloth that would be combined with string ornaments or with polychrome artistic embroideries with wool, silk and cotton threads.

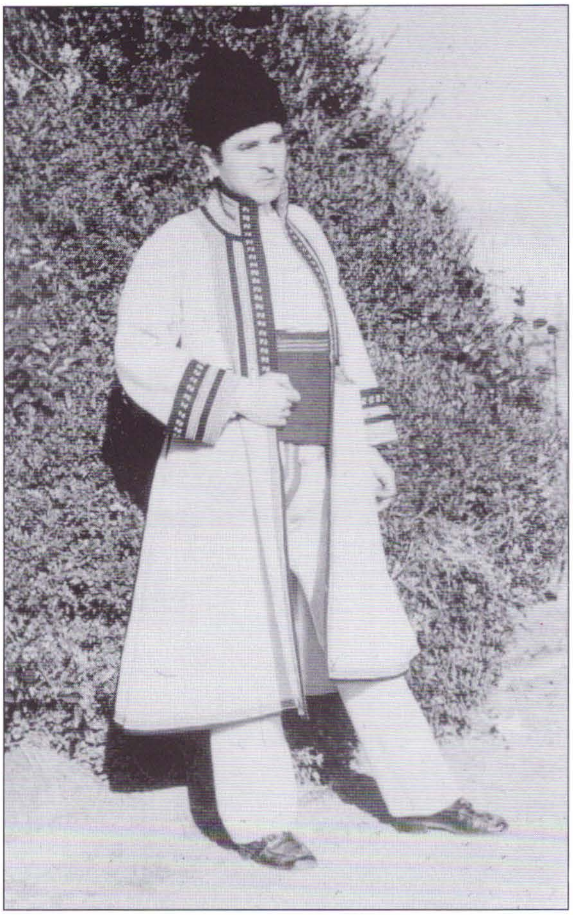
The sculpture-like structure of the folk costume with *suman* is given by the placing of decorations in positions that are most visible: on the collar, breast, gores, margins of the sleeves and laps.

Some of these coats would be worn like cloaks, over the shoulders as their sleeves had more a decorative function; other would be put on like coats but both types conferred to the figure of the costume wearer certain monumentality.

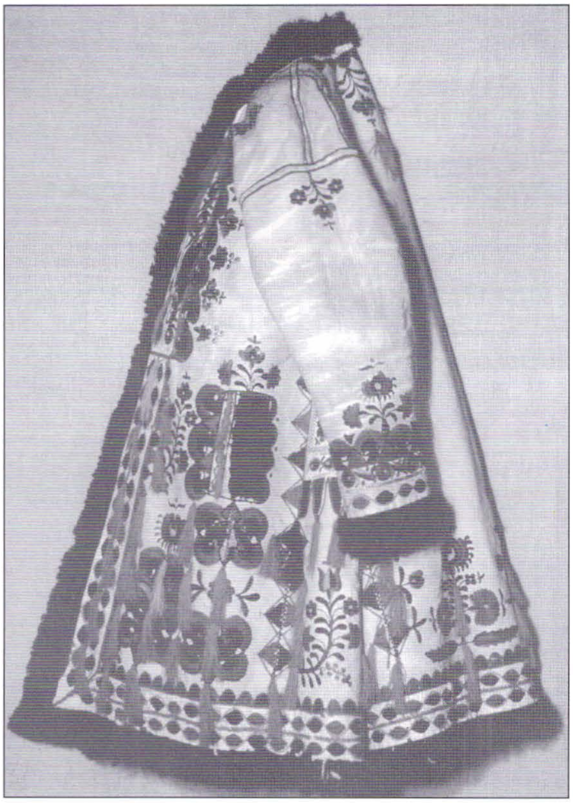
A coat of a distinctive cut is the piece known as *căbăniţă* or *duruţ* in Banat and *ipingea*, *imurluc*, *ghebă* or *manta* in the Danube Plain and Dobrudja. This type of steppe coat is frequent in the south-eastern Europe. It is an ample piece of big dimension, cut of four or five texture pieces sewn together at the horizontal sides. It is ankle-long, with a straight collar raised around the neck and a hood (*chepeneag*), with or without sleeves and with lateral gores, made of frieze in the technique of the four threads. The *ipingea* was buttoned with wooden or leather buttons and it was ornamented by coloured cloth or multicoloured passement applied in the front, on the sleeves and laps and with polychrome sewing on the hood. People would wear the *ipingea* in winter, when they had to go to distant places. As it was very functional, this coat was also adopted by the coachmen in the south of the country, becoming the distinctive mark of their profession.

As they are made of very resistant materials and have simple cuts and ancient ornamental motives, the long frieze coats make us think of the prime archetypal models that have been transmitted along centuries and developed plastic patterns and variants that depended on historic, economic, ritual and cultural factors and encrypted information on the peasant spirituality.

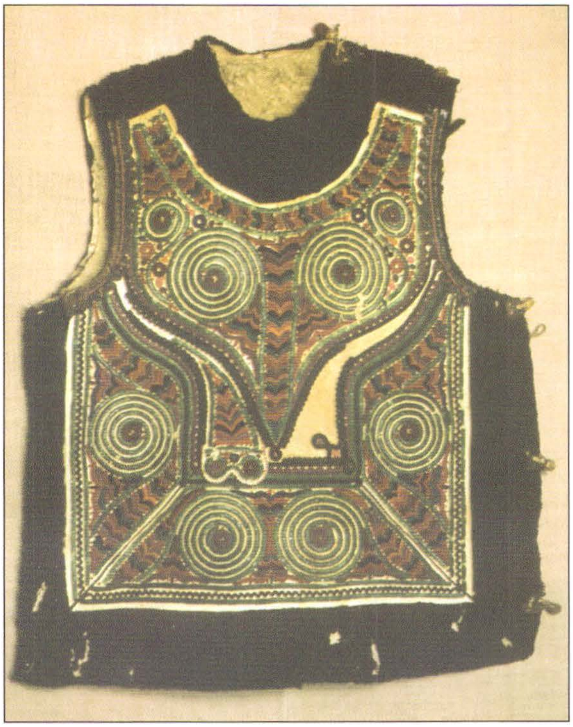
The cutting principles used to tailor the thick frieze coats are also used to make waistcoats and sheepskin coats. The leather and fur waistcoats and coats have been widespread in Romania, not only in the colder



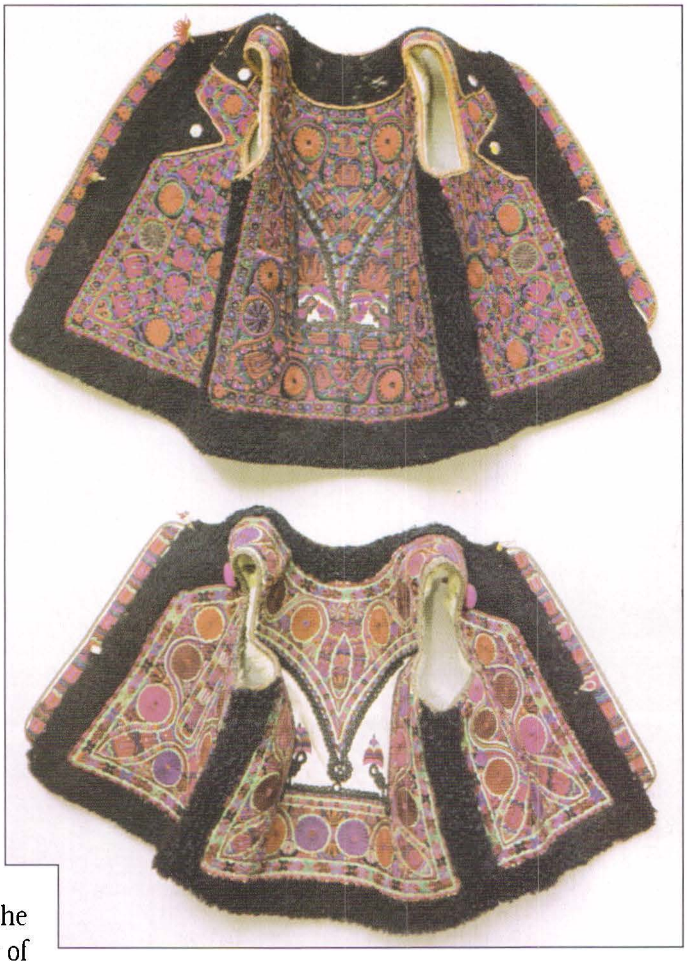
Man wearing a **şubă** (Oltenia)



Sheepskin coat from Năsăud



*Waistcoat with **cosoaie***
specific to the Danube area



Waistcoats from the Romanaţi area

mountainous areas but also in those regions where the pastoral occupation had a main role in the economy of the households.

The ***waistcoats*** (sleeveless coats) have two variants: the *sewn up waistcoats*, sewn on the shoulders and under the armpit or only under the armpit and amply decorated on their entire surface and the *cleaved waistcoats*, straight or flaring, with gores, with length and decoration that would vary according to sex, age, occasion and local traditions.

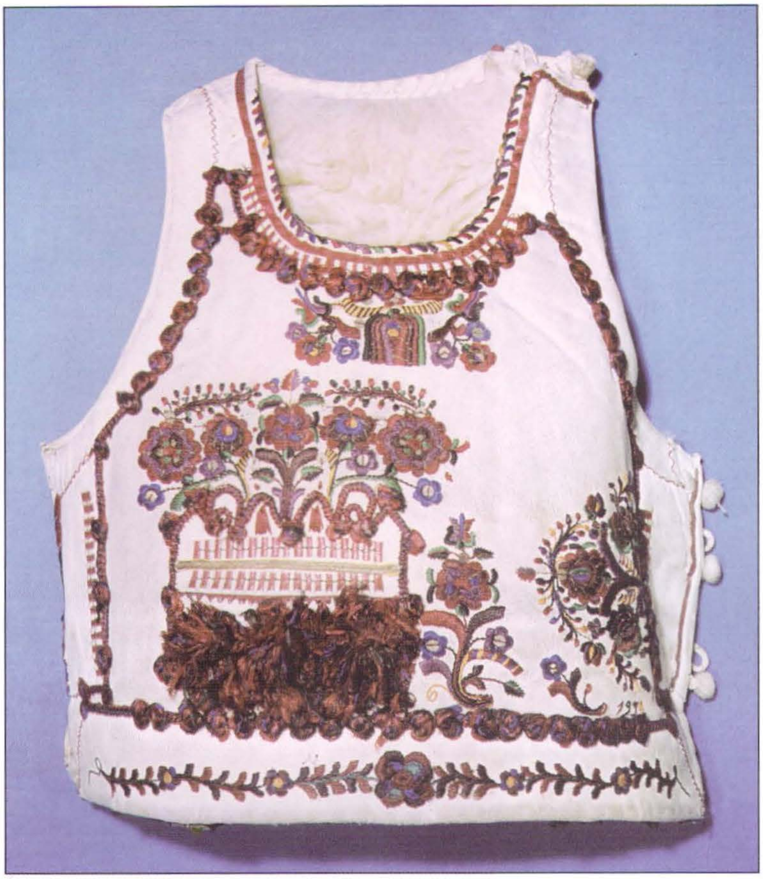
The ***sheepskin coats*** differ from the waistcoats because they have sleeves and are always open in the front. By their ample cut and rich decoration, the sheepskin coats for holidays or ceremonial occasions become extremely expensive.

There are various manners of adorning the waistcoats and the sheepskin coats: beginning with the polychrome embroideries with wool, soft wool, dyed cotton thread (*arnici*) and silk, metallic thread embroideries, beads, pailletes, ornamental applications made of *irhă* (white leather strands, decorated with artistic sewn patterns or coloured applications), plaits of *irhă*, incrustations with other materials (mirrors, metallic ornaments), application of "buttons", cords and coloured tassels. To these, expensive fur trimmings are added (polecat, ferret, otter) or trimmings of black and grey Astrakhan or *prim*, a house woven silk or wool texture that imitates the Astrakhan. All these ornaments amplified the plastic and expressive valences of the waistcoats and sheepskin coats, harmonizing them in point of decoration and chromatics to the rest of the costume elements.

The long coats of woollen texture as well as the waistcoats and the sheepskin coats have been attributed a great importance, conferring prestige to their wearers, as the votive paintings of village churches demonstrate, portraying the founders dressed up in such coats. At the same time, these thick coats would transmit social, ritual and aesthetic messages, being included traditionally in the costume of bridegrooms even in the warm seasons, up to the present.

The component pieces of the traditional costume have always been social, ritual, ceremonial and zonal marks, indicating by certain ornamental motives and by the colour nuances, the inclusion of the costume wearer into a certain social category and ethnographical zone.

The official documents in medieval Transylvania contained numerous restrictions, among which the interdiction of wearing certain clothes that marked distinctively the members of a certain social category.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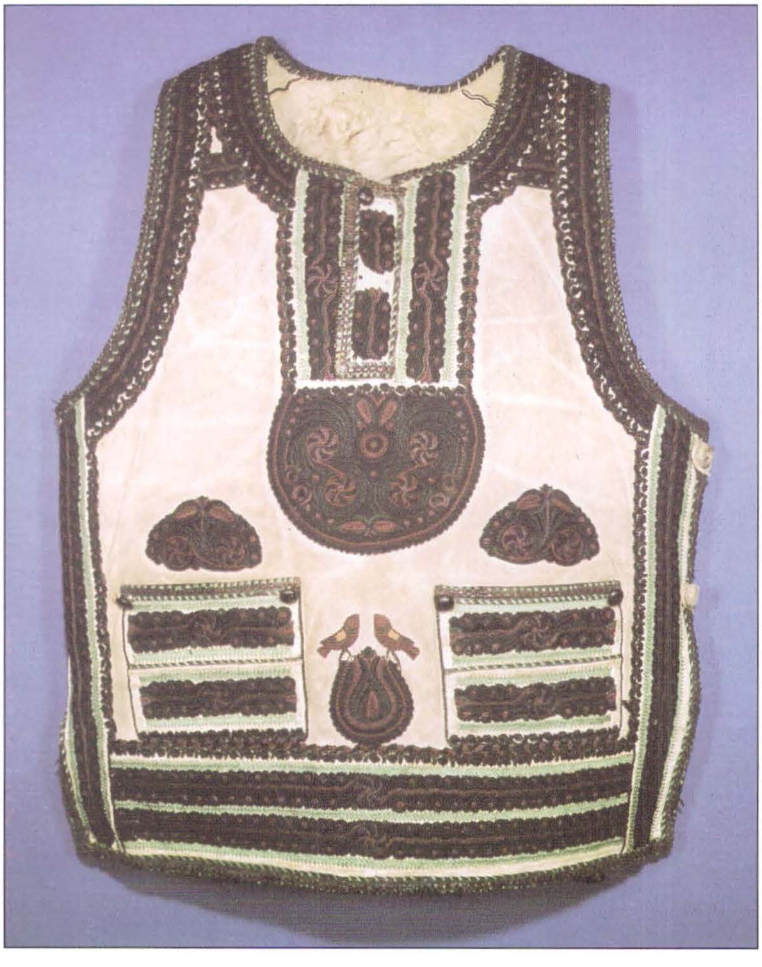

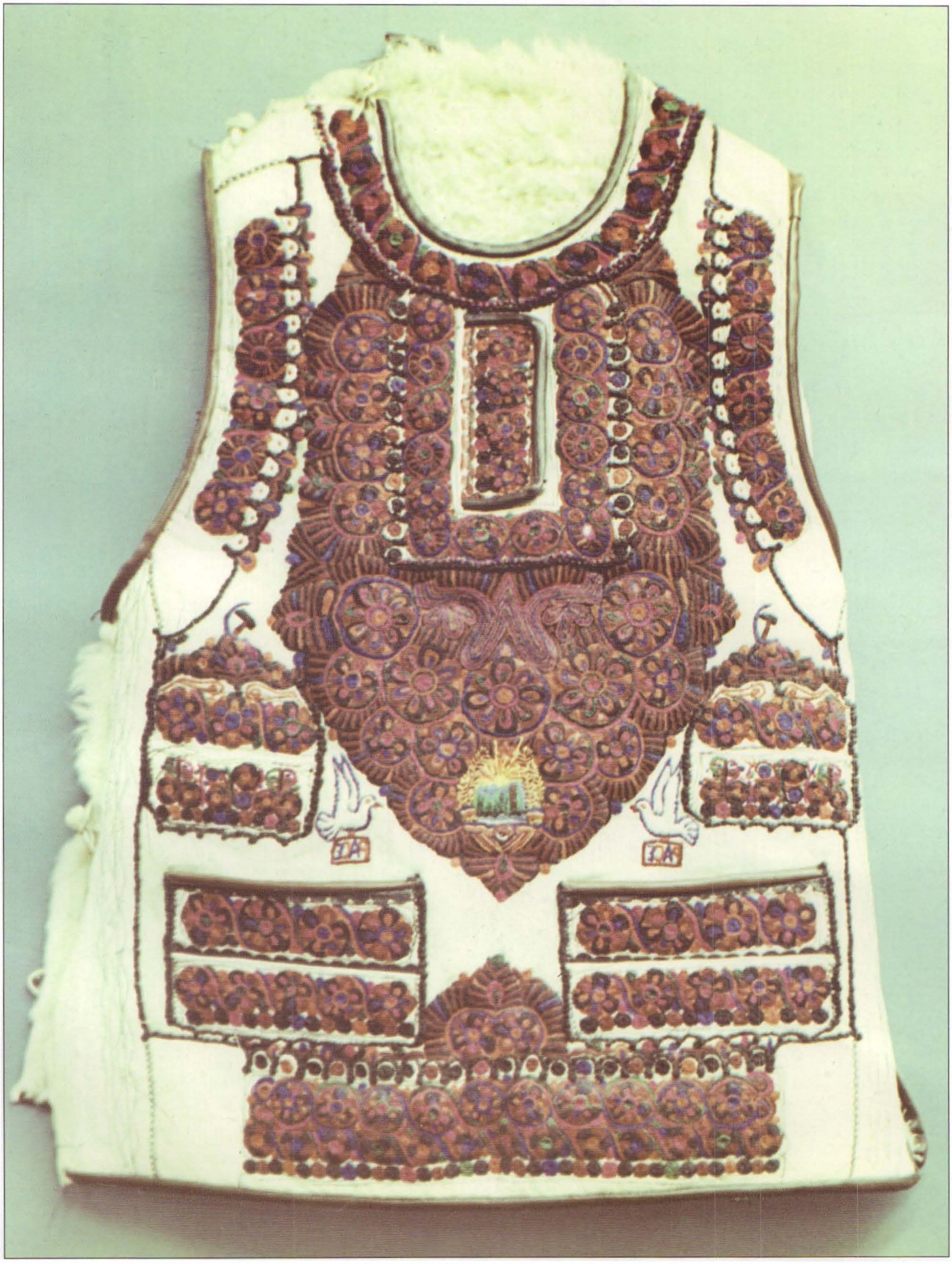

For example, the law code (*Dieta*) of 1650 ruled that no peasant, wage earner or servant should wear cloth garments, trousers, boots, a double cap or a cap that had cost one *florin* (medieval currency) and thin fabric shirt.[2] The *Dieta* of 1683 provided even more interdictions: "From now on, no peasant or wage-earning servant, except for the servants of estate-owners, court servants, mercenaries and gunmen should wear iron or iron-bound arms (only shepherds are allowed to wear a lance). Also, the same will not wear fur caps of marten, wolf or fox fur, sewn shirts of thin fabric or other fabrics, high boots and cloth coats, except for the coats of white frieze. The *iobagi* (serfs) will wear common clothes, according to their condition".[3]

Therefore, however well-off a Romanian serf had been (the Saxon serfs had certain privileges), he would not have had the right to abandon the traditional costume that marked his nationality and social servitude. The Romanian serf could only wear *opinci* and not boots, white frieze coats that differentiated him from all the other categories, only scratchy shirts of hemp or flax, the thin cotton fabric being forbidden for him and he would cover his head only with a lamb fur cap that marked his origin of "tolerated shepherd" among the three privileged nations (the Hungarians, the Saxons and the Szecklers).

While the laws in Transylvania oppressed the Romanian majority population that constituted the massive category of serfs, across the Carpathians people in different social categories would dress according to tradition, the lowest position being also marked by the wearing of the "white Romanian clothes".

The 1817 decision of the Ruling Prince Caragea is significant in point of marking the social attributes of clothing. In order to punish one of his subjects, Caragea decreed: "First make him Romanian, by dressing him in white clothes and then take him in the market and beat him as guilty and announce loudly the guilt for which he is punished".[4]

In the case above, the most infamous punishment was not beating but "the doom of Romanian clothing", which meant that the guilty person was lowered on the social scale and obliged to wear the white clothes of the poor.

After the 1918 Great Unification of the Romanian provinces, the stratification of the rural population

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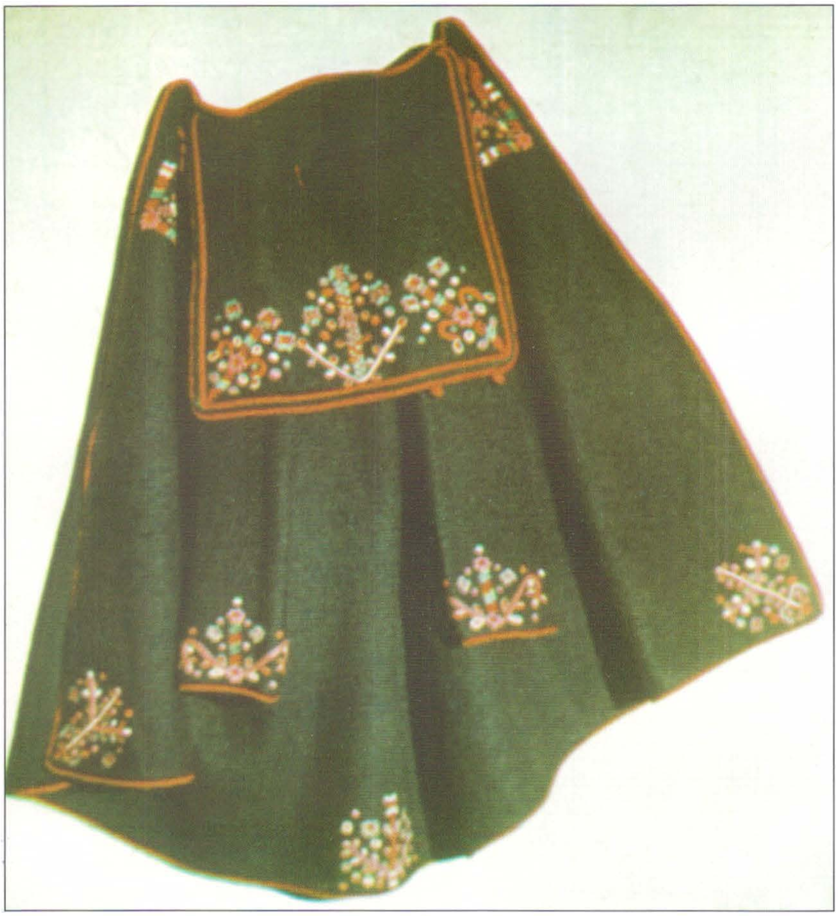
[2] D. Prodan, *Supplex libellus valachorum. Din istoria formării națiunii române* (*Supplex libellus valachorum. From the History of the Building of Romanian Nation*), p. 120.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 123.

[4] Nicolae Iorga, *Opere economice* (*Economic Works*), p. 159.

←
Waistcoats from Răşinari (page 80 above), Orăştie (page 80 below), and Drăguş (page 81)



Mantle (Suceava district)

grew deeper. According to their material condition, they could be poor, middle-wealth peasants (*mijlocaşi*) and well-off peasants (*chiaburi*).

In Vrancea district, only the wealthy women would wear *botfori* (red boots, creased in the lower part and bought from Breţcu): "Rare were those who would wear boots; one should have been too well-off or should try too much to show off to wear them".[5]

In the Hălmagiu area, only the well-off women would wear high boots on holidays. The high (*vărzărăneşti*) boots would be specific for Hălmagiu while the short (*abrudăneşti*) boots would be worn in the area of the town Brad.

In the Bistriţa-Năsăud district, only the people in certain social categories could afford to order richly ornamented sheepskin coats that were made by Saxon craftsmen from the towns Reghin or Bistriţa. Such sheepskin coats had wool and silk sewn patterns and a few centimetre long silk tassels attached among the flowers of the embroidery and they were extremely expensive: "...only a great host could wear them".[6]

In the Apuseni Mountains area, the sheepskin coat was one of the most expensive costume pieces, obligatory for a girl who wanted to marry.[7]

In the commune Rucăr (Muscel district), only the well-off would wear felt hats, larger *cioareci* of white frieze and even trousers of *şai* (soft industrial cloth), while the poorer men would wear cloth hats and tight *cioareci*. The wealthy ones would wear their overcoats (*zeghe*, *sarică*, *cojoc*) as cloaks over their shoulders.[8]

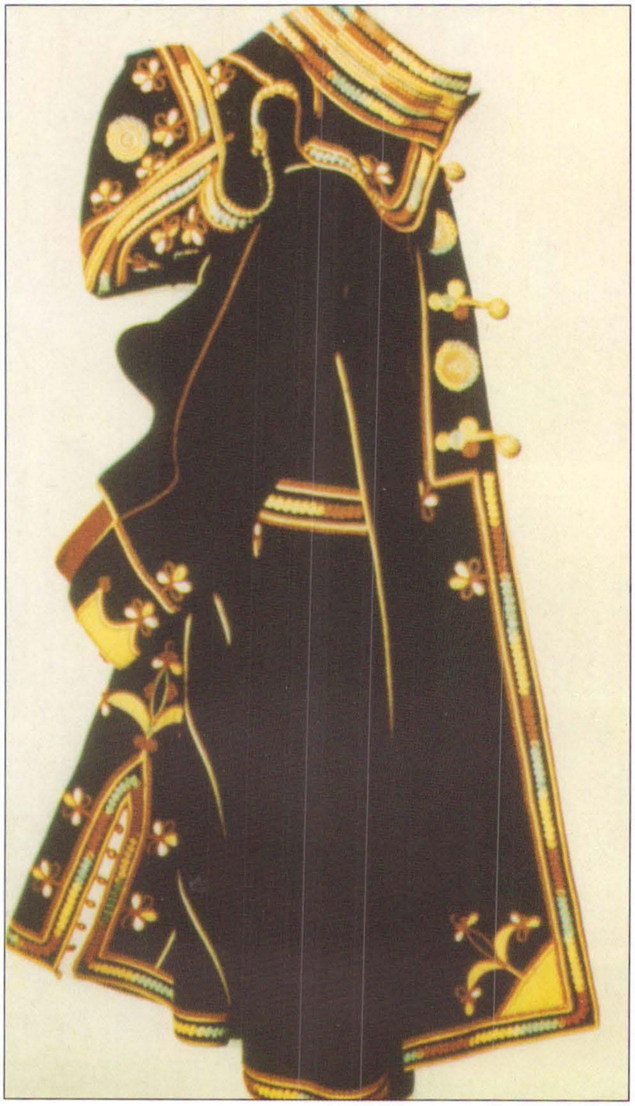
The wealthier peasants stated their economic and social position by adopting urban costume pieces that made them stand out among their poorer neighbours.

For example, in the Vâlcea area, the wealthy peasants would wear dark red velvet short overcoats with lamb fur, bought from the fairs in Râureni and Râmnic.[9]

In the commune Cireşu (Mehedinţi district), only rich girls and women would wear *dulamă* (short coats of fine cloth, velvet or silk), lined with lamb fur and had fox fur applications around the neck and at the ends of the sleeves. In the same area, amply ornamented sheepskin coats, extremely expensive and made of the craftsmen in Podeni, would distinguish the rich women of the poorer ones.[10]

We can conclude that the costume marked at the same time the status and aesthetic taste of people in a social class and the restrictions that the upper classes imposed for the clothing of the subordinate categories.

On different occasions, the female and male traditional folk costumes would be completed by a series of annex costume pieces, among which the kerchiefs and the textile bags (*trăistuţe*) were the most frequent.



Ipingea – a specific coat for the Danube zone

The **kerchiefs (năframe)** were used as annexes to holiday costumes and as ritual objects at weddings and funerals and they were made of linen, hemp or cotton. The four corners of kerchiefs were richly ornamented with different sewn or woven motives, made with coloured soft wool or dyed cotton. The women would wear kerchiefs at the waist, the girls would keep them in their hands and the young men would put them under the belts, hanging down one hip.

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[5] Ion Diaconu, *Ţinutul Vrancei. Etnografie-Folklor-Dialectologie* (*The Vrancea County. Ethnography-Folklore-Dialectology*), p. LIX.

[6] Lena Constante; Varvara Guşe, *Şuşiţa din Şanţ* (*Şuşiţa of Şanţ*), p. 36.

[7] Teofil Frâncu; George Candrea, *Românii din Munţii Apuseni* (*The Romanians of the Apuseni Mountains*), p. 12.

[8] Gh. Pârnuţă, *Rucăr. monografie sociologică* (*Rucăr. A Sociological Monography*), pp. 295 and 297.

[9] Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*The Festive Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 26.

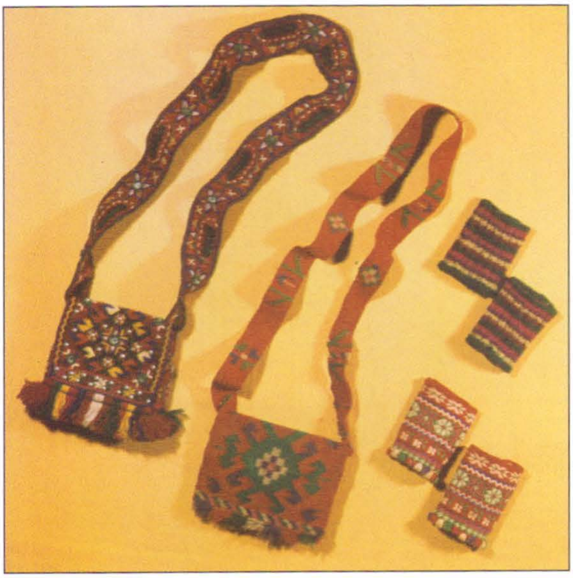
[10] O. Pernicek. *Elementele portului femeiesc din comuna Cireşu* (*Elements of the Folk Costume in the Commune Cireşu*), p. 520.

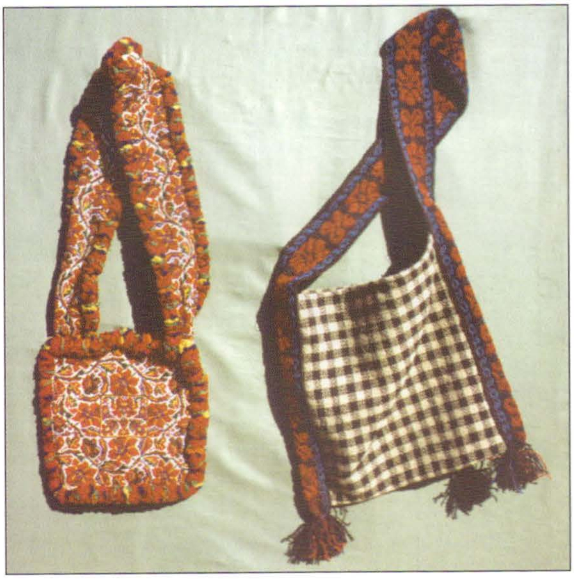
The obligatory ceremonial kerchiefs of the wedding were embroidered by the bride herself. The bridegroom's handkerchief had a powerful significance, symbolizing the union between the two young protagonists of the wedding.

The textile bag (*trăistuţa*) would mark without exception the traditional costume and it is worn even today on holidays, as useful and aesthetic accessory that confers a picturesque aspect to the whole costume. These textile bags can be made of house woven fabric, decorated with sewn patterns but usually with woven streaked or squared patterns in the technique of the four threads and they have many zonal variants. Their straps are richly decorated with hand-woven geometrical motives and with tassels (*canafi*) of the same colour as the straps that adorn the lower corners of the bags and stress their decorative function.

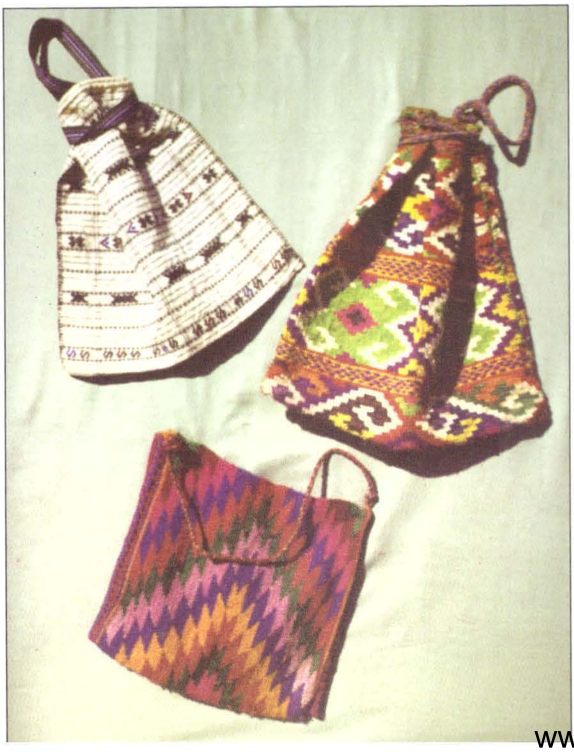
When working for her dowry, a girl would always take care to weave and sew the kerchiefs in time and to have enough woven cloth (5-7 meters) to make the textile bags for her future household.

The presentation of the component pieces of the Romanian folk costume reveals a perfect correspondence between the male and the female clothing. The geometric sculptural male costume is an effective match for the rich decoration and picturesque aspect of the female costume.

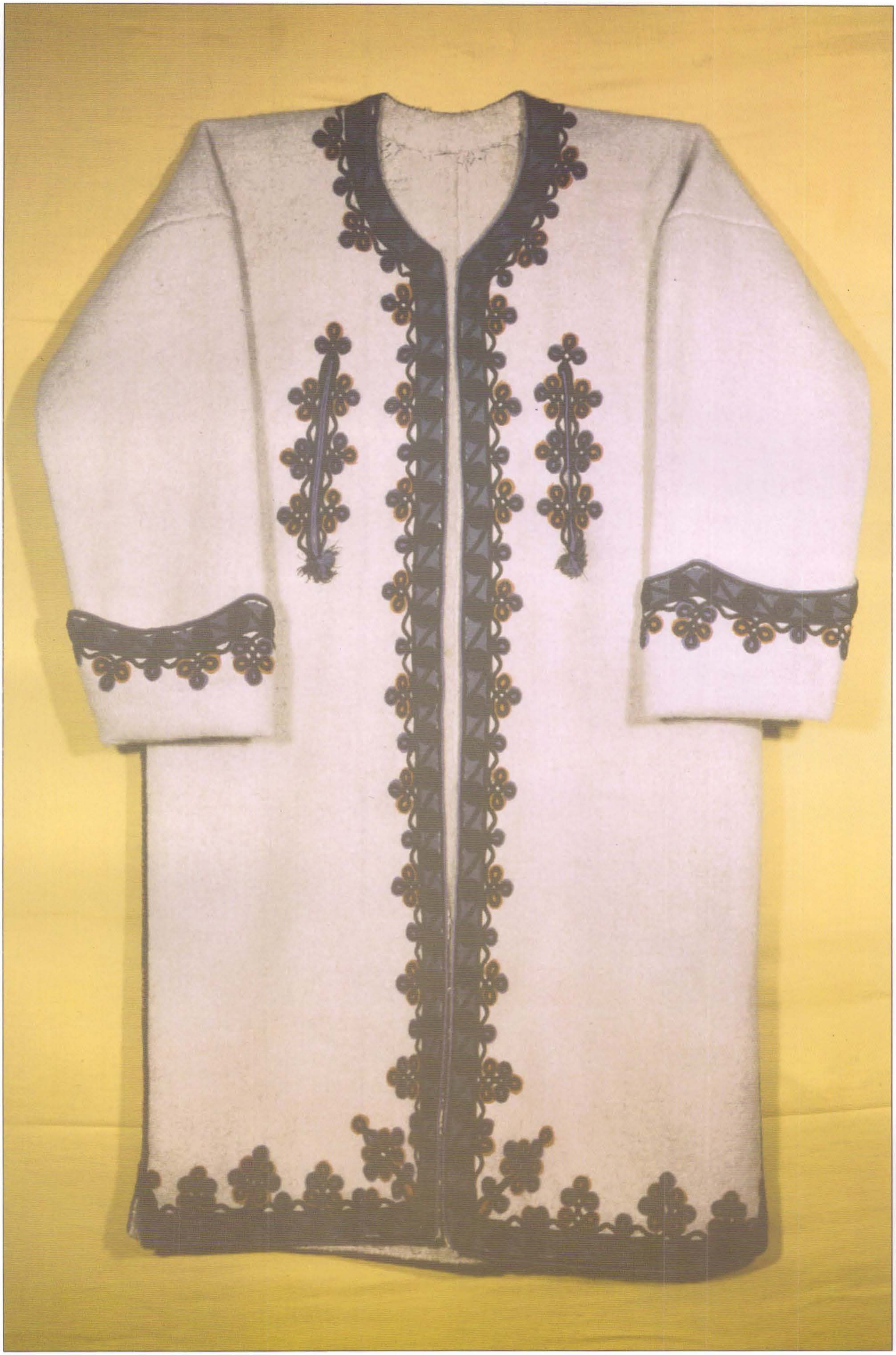


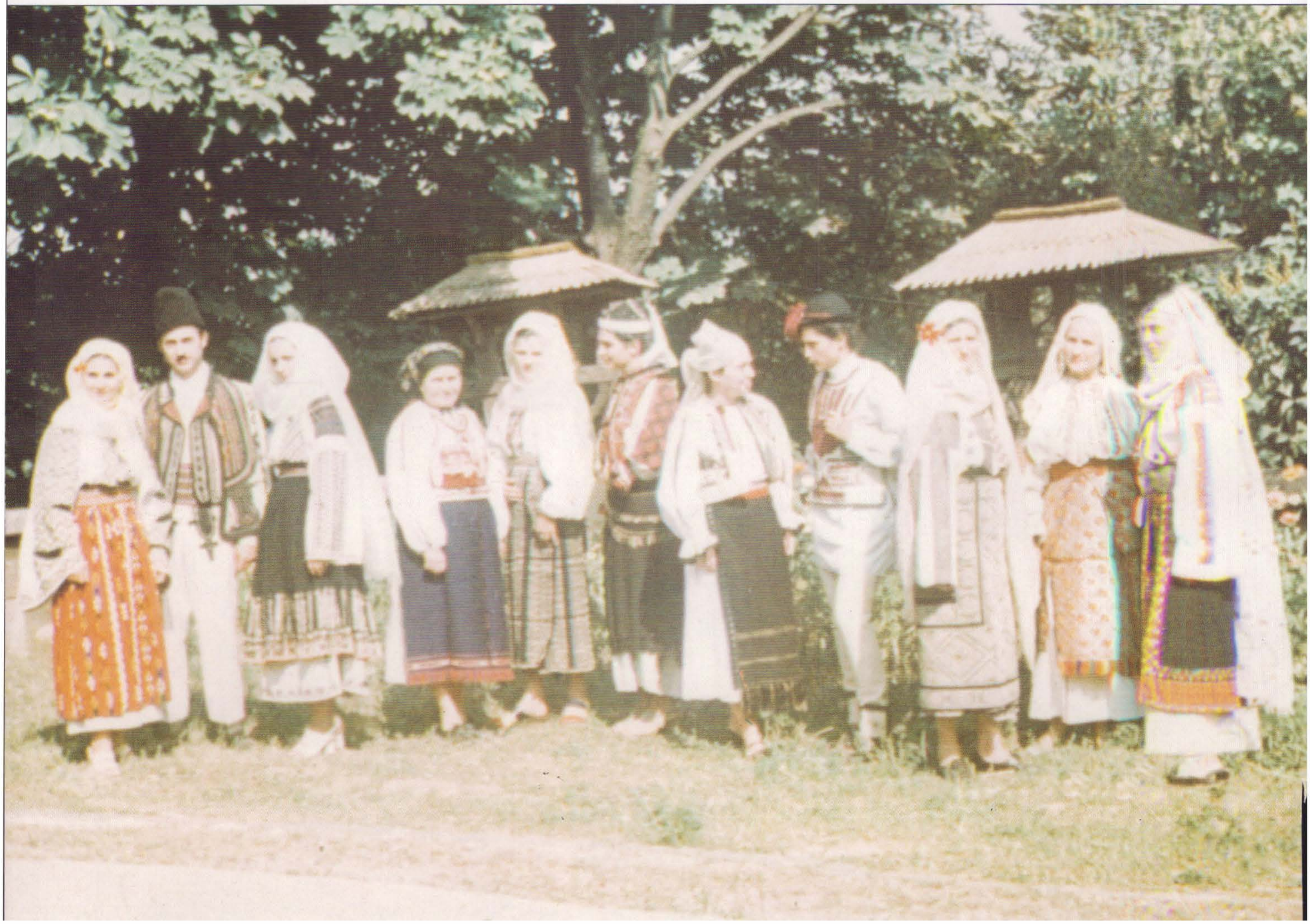


Textile bags from Maramureş (1), Oaş and Suceava (2), Sibiu and Banat (3)



***Şubă** from the Bistra Valley (Banat)* →





Zonal marks of the Romanian folk costume

As any cultural phenomenon, the folk costume has to be analyzed as part of its including cultural areas, defined by a common history and similar life conditions, so as to distinguish the Romanian ethnic characters and the specifically zonal features of traditional clothing.

By its artistic language, a certain style shapes out, identifies and borders communities that adopted it in the matter of clothing, under analogous life conditions and sharing a common spiritual and cultural background.

A certain costume that generates a number of morphologic and decorative variants grows to be an acknowledgment and identification emblem, a mark of the ethnic inclusion of a group of people characterized by certain life views, moral principles and particulars of style, technique and artistic expression.

That is why we present below the folk costume of the great Romanian historic provinces, following the space and time coordinates of some types of costume which are representative for great cultural areas and reflect the time, place and characteristics of the human group that created them.

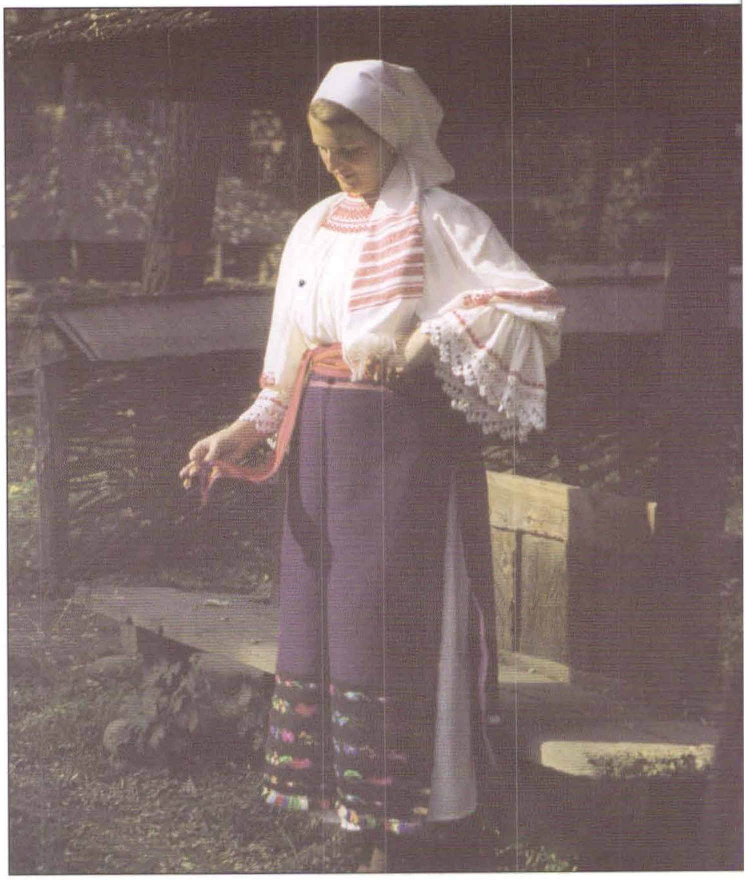
Transylvania

Transylvania is one of the most beautiful Romanian regions, with mountains that shelter the vestiges of the sacred Dacian sanctuaries, but also the galleries of the gold and salt mines that attracted the Roman legions who came and covered the land of Dacia with a network of stone roads and towns that helped spreading the Latin culture and language.

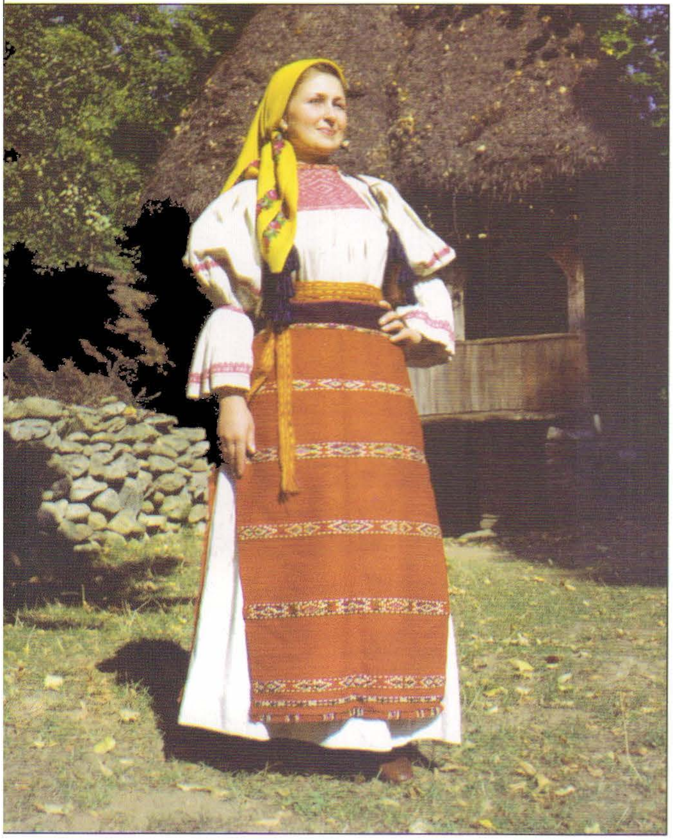
As nest and fortress of Romanians, Transylvania is characterized by an impressive ethnographic treasure that reveals - under attentive research - the soul, skills and talents of a people who knew how to defend its identity, belief, customs and costume inherited from the ancestors.

The Transylvanian folk costume was unitary on large areas until the 19th century; then it started to develop distinct variants, depending on the development of economic condition and artistic crafts (sheepskin and coat crafting, tannery, tailoring and shoemaking) of the inhabitants and on the intensification of the economic and cultural contacts with the other Romanian areas. The Transylvanian folk costume is part of the typology of the costume with paired *catrințe* which is generalized on the entire Romanian territory, only a few exceptions included.

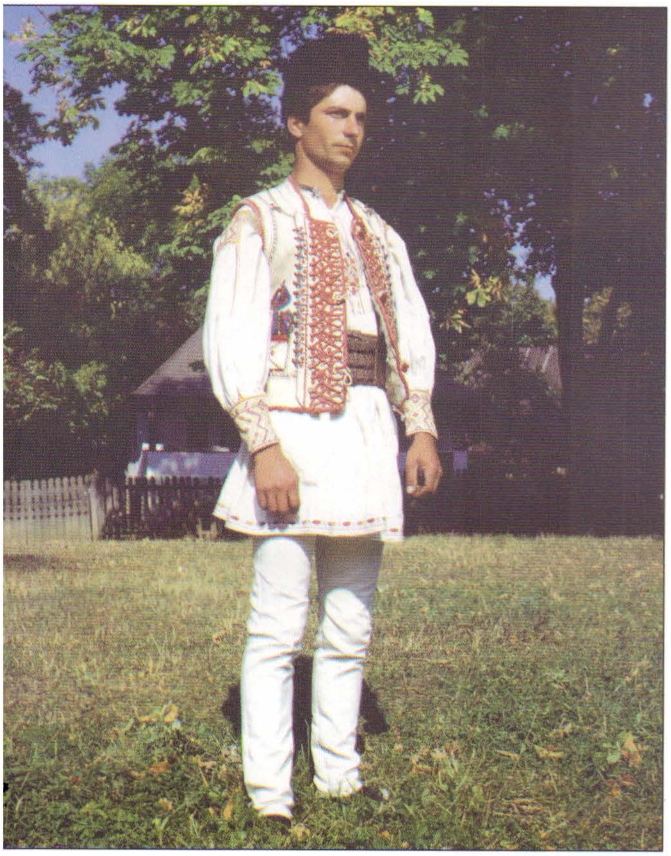
The clothing assemble made of *the shirt with ciupag* and *the catrință with dark blue body* has constituted the representative mark of the Transylvanian female costume for centuries, as women in almost all parts of the province would wear such costumes at work and on holidays until the end of the 19th century.



Folk costume: shirt with ***ciupag***
and dark blue ***zadie*** *(Mureș)*



*Folk costume: shirt with **ciupag** and dark blue **zadie** (the Apuseni Mountains)*



*Traditional costume: cap, shirt with **barburi**, **izmene**, **chimir**, waistcoat (the Apuseni Mountains)*

The female costume with the two elements mentioned above was widespread on a large area that included the shepherd dwellings in the Apuseni Mountains, the Land of the Moţi, the Transylvanian Plain, Bistriţa, Năsăud, Bihor, Sălaj, the Land of Lăpuş and the area of the upper Mureş. By its frequency and duration, this old costume represents a most valuable historic, ethnographic and artistic document, a proof of the continuity and autochthonous status of the Romanians in Transylvania and an ethnic mark that asserted the precedence and majority of the Romanian population compared to the other ethnic groups that settled later on the Transylvanian land.

Analysing the spreading area of the type of costume made of the shirt with *ciupag* and the *catrinţă (zadie)* with dark blue body, we notice that this area coincides with the pre-state social political and territorial entity called "the Land of Transylvania".

In the Chronicle of Simion Dascălul we read that "the Land of Transylvania is not only a simple land, it is the middle of the country. As a consequence, the neighbouring smaller lands are part of Transylvania and are mastered by it. These smaller lands are Maramureş (towards Poland), the Szecklers' land (towards Moldavia), the Land of Olt (toward Wallachia) and the Land of Bârsa, the Land of Haţeg and the Land of Oaş".[1]

The women's folk costume made of the shirt with *ciupag* and the *catrinţă (zadie)* with dark blue body was spread beyond the Land of Transylvania, being worn in some peripheral areas like the Land of Lăpuş, the Meseş area (Sălaj district) and the Năsăud area.

We should examine the particulars of this type of costume, beginning with the head covers.

The hairdos and headdresses would vary from one zone to the other within the described area of circulation, but there were also a lot of common elements.

One element that confers unity to the researched area is the obligatory use by the married women of supports on the head that had the obvious function of shaping the hairdo and fixing and supporting the head covers.

The support of the headdresses in the areas of the Apuseni Mountains (Arieş Valley), the Huedin-Călăţele Depression and the Năsăud zone was made of artificial hair: thin wool filaments (dyed in the household with alder bark boiled with *galiscău* and fixing substance) that thickened and strengthened the natural hair. These artificial hair supports, called *sclebe* in the Apuseni Mountains (Arieş Valley) and in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression and *steble* in the Năsăud zone were worn obligatorily.

Another headdress support used in the Năsăud and Mureş zones was a piece of wood (*gătej*) named *conci*, around which the plaits were folded.

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[1] Simion Dascălul, *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei până la Aron Vodă* (*The Chronicle of the Moldavian Country until the Time of Aron Vodă*, p. 111.

The women in the zones of Mureş, Lăpuş, Huedin and Bucium (Sălaj district) would wear their hair with middle parting and braided in two intertwined plaits that formed a bun on the crown of the head. This hairdo was called *colac, conci* or *conc* in Mureş, *corcoman* in Bucium (Sălaj district) and *chică* in Huedin.

When their hair was rarer, the women in the Mureş zone would wrap a band (called *râză* locally) around their hair-loop to make it look thicker.

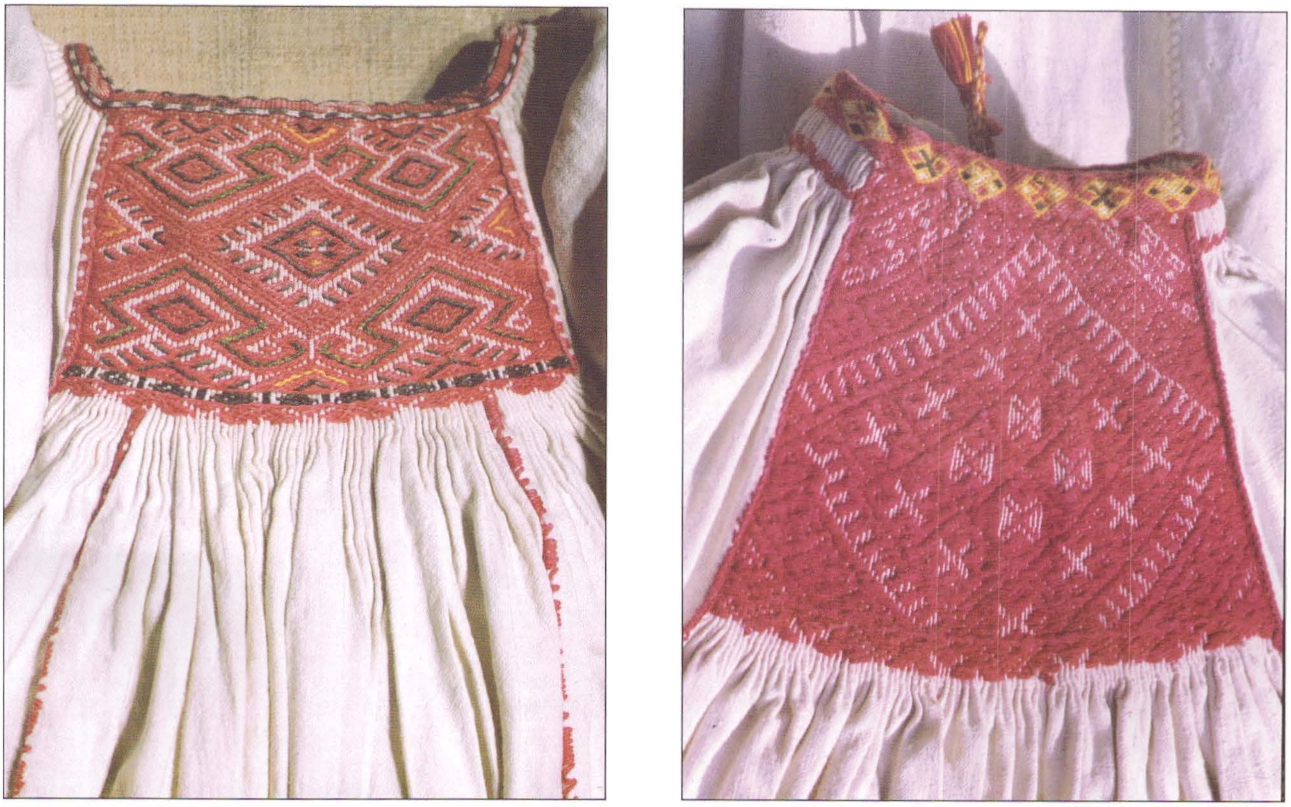
Women in the Transylvanian Plain, in the Năsăud zone and in some villages in the Huedin Depression would part their hair in the middle and braid it into two plaits that surrounded the head as a crown, being united at the nape of the neck.

A frequent hairdo on the Arieş Valley was the one with two plaits. Women would part their hair in the middle and started to braid it from under the ears. They would add woollen *sclebe* in the plaits to strengthen and thicken the hair and at the end tied the plaits with red *şinor*. The two plaits would be turned in front of the ears and folded in semicircles to be drawn to the back of the head, where the right plait would be folded to the left and the left plait would be folded to the right and the string (*şinor*) of the right plait would be drawn across the crown of the head and tied of the string of the left plait.[2]

The kerchief (*ştergar*) that covered the heads of married women is an ancient costume piece called *tindeu* in the area of the the *shirt with ciupag* and the *catrinţă (zadie) with dark blue body.*

Women would weave these kerchiefs in the household of hemp and cotton and later only of cotton, ornating it at the ends with red or with red and black streaks, in the Mureş zone. The *tindeu* of Năsăud would be decorated with narrow streaks at one end and especially with polychrome geometrical motives. The white kerchief, called *potelat* in the Huedin Depression, was woven in the house and decorated on the front margin with geometrical ornaments in a range of colours that included nuances of red, black and green.[3]

Under the Saxon influence, the *tindeu* has been replaced by a complex headdress that included many elements, both head covers and support pieces.



Shirts with ***ciupag****: Lăpuş (left) and the Arieş Valley (right)*

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[2] The hairdo with plaits (*cosiţe* or *cioci*) was common among the women in the areas of Petroşani and the Târnava Mare Valley, *cf.* Valeriu Butură, *Evoluţia portului popular în sectorul răsăritean al Munţilor Apuseni Apuseni (The Evolution of the Folk Clothing in the Eastern Sector of the Apuseni Mountains)*, p. 236.

[3] Aurelia Tiţă, *Portul popular românesc din depresiunea Călăţele (Romanian Folk Costume in Călăţele Depression)*, p. 235.

The annex support piece of the headdress in the Transylvanian Plain, Mureş and Năsăud was the *căiţă*, named locally *ceapţa cu brusturi*, which the godmother would place on the head of the young woman for the first time at the end of the wedding, during the ritual known as the "covering of the bride". The *ceapţă cu brusturi* was made of hair, silk, cloth or a black resistant fabric and it was decorated with embroidered polychrome floral motives, small sequins and beads and golden or silvery passement named *wire*. A black creased lace (called *brusturi* - comfrey) adorned its margins and it was fixed with strings under the chin. On holidays, the *ceapţa cu brusturi* was further adorned with *peteaua cu ruji* - an inch wide ribbon made of hair or cloth and embroidered with floral patterns or made of beads sewn on black fabric.

The *ceapţă* (*ceapsă*) was initially associated with the *tindeu* and then with the textile pieces that replaced it.

The women in the areas Lăpuş, Bucium-Sălaj and Huedin would cover their heads with a big hair or silk kerchief, with a black background ornamented all around with flowers and with tassels on its margins.

In their turn, the *tindeu* and the textile pieces that followed it were replaced by the industrial head kerchief that was associated with the *ceapsă* in its area of circulation.

Wherever these headdresses with *ceapsă* were worn, the funeral custom would require that the women who had worn them from their wedding on should be buried wearing the same piece of costume that had marked their ritual passage into the category of married women.

The shirt with *ciupag* observes the morphologic and compositional scheme of the prototype in all its local-zonal variants: it has always the neck slide at the back, the decoration is placed in the same ornamental fields and it is made by using the same techniques. The differences are of second-rate importance and refer to the amplitude of decoration, the diversity of manner of associating the decorative elements to create compositions and decorative fields and the chromatic nuances.

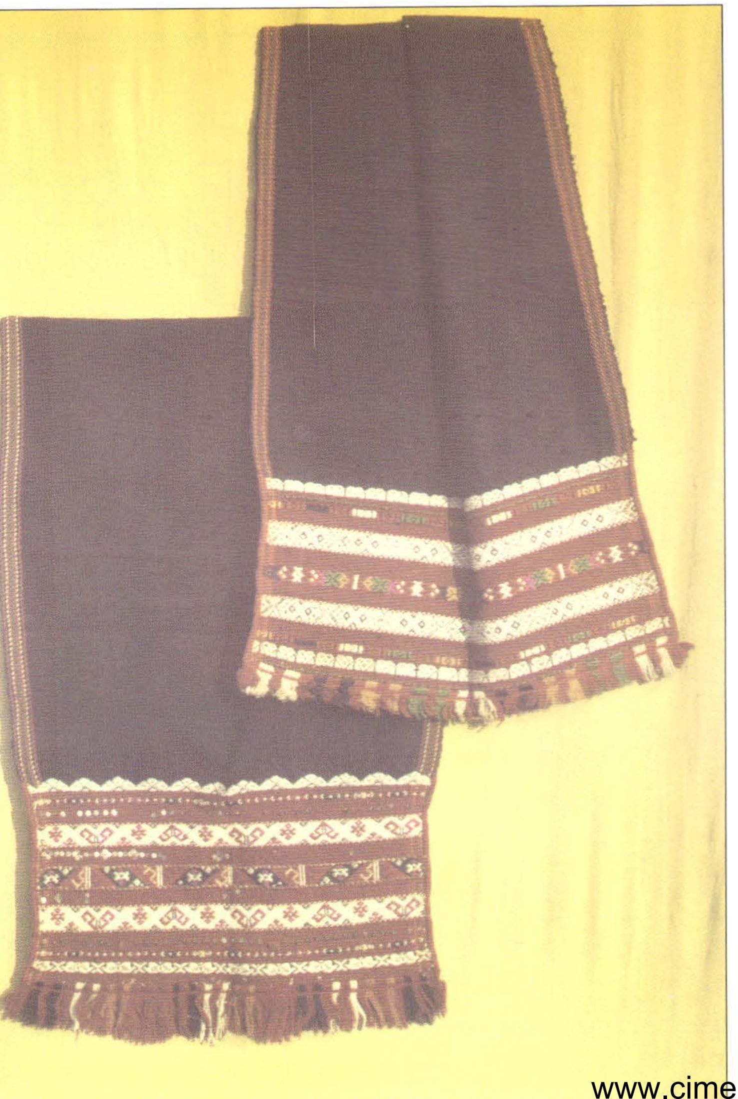
The next element I should describe is the *ciupag*.

The *ciupag* is a trapezoidal decorative element, with its smaller side placed immediately under the shirt collar and sewn with an ancient technique, known as "on the rim of the pleats" and spread in the western Europe of the 15th and 16th centuries, but also in Estonia, Finland, Russia[4] and on costume pieces in the south-east of Asia.

A similar technique - "warped on the pleats" - is used to decorate Romanian, Saxon and Hungarian shirts outside the spreading area of this type of costume, but the *ciupag* as decorative element sewn with this technique is specific only to the Romanian Transylvanian population.

The rougher or softer fabrics used to make the shirt were selected according to occasion: only hemp cloth for work and hemp with cotton, cotton, linen or cotton with linen for holidays. There was a close connection between the material of the shirt and the ornaments that adorned it.

From the morphologic point of view, the shirt with *ciupag* belongs to the *Carpathian type*, having the *stani* (body) and the sleeves united and pleated around the neck. According to the data gathered for the *AER*, the terms that name locally the *ciupag* are very varied, although *ciupag* is the most frequent in the bibliography. The *ciupag* is called *prolog* in the north of the Meseş zone (Sălaj), *chiept tras* or *chiept pe creţele* in Lăpuş, *chept* in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression and



Zadii *with dark blue body (Mureş)*

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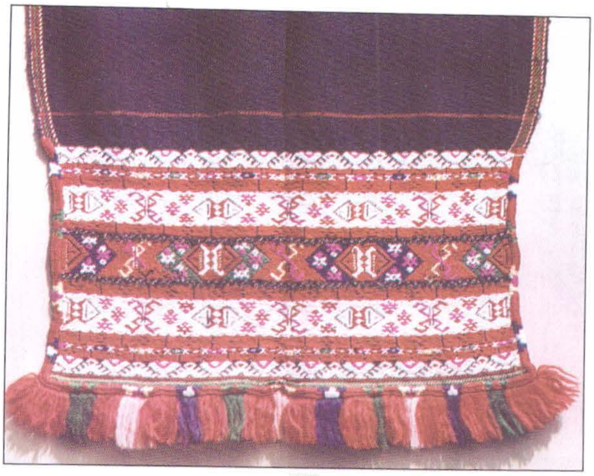
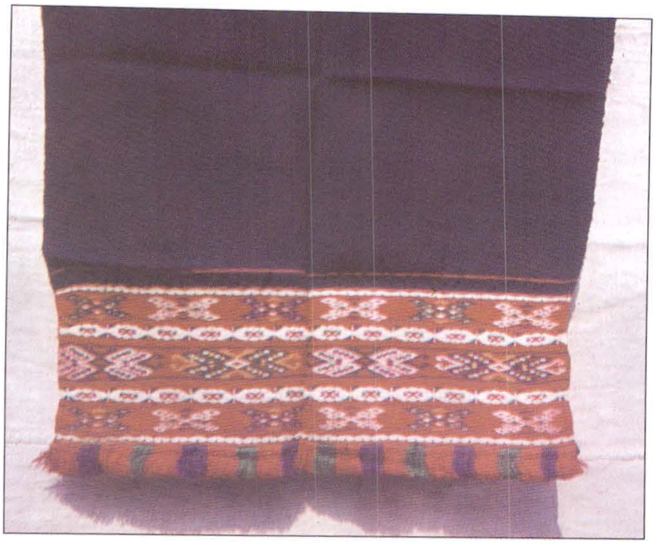
[4] G. Oprescu, *Probleme româneşti de artă ţărănească* (*Romanian Issues of the Peasant Art*), p. 175; Elena Secoşan; Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România* (*Festive Folk Costume in Romania*), p. 56.





***Zadii** with dark blue body*
from Năsăud and Lăpuş

in the Transylvanian Plain, *chept* or *chept tras* in the Năsăud and Mureş zones, *ciupag* in the Apuseni Mountains (Mocănime and Măgureni areas), and on the Gurghiu Valley.

The upper part of the shirt in the in the area of *the shirt with ciupag* and *the catrinţă (zadie) with dark blue body* was separated from the laps and known as *spăcel* or *cămeşă*. A square or triangular piece of cloth (*pavă*) was introduced under the armpit to enlarge the shirt. Sometimes, shirts were without *pave* but have lateral gores beginning from the waist and ending under the armpits.

The main ornamental fields of the shirt with *ciupag* were the collar, the *ciupag* and the sleeves.

The collar was separate and it was sewn to the shirt according to old techniques: *on the inside, in crosses, in flies, on the thread, by drawing*. The collar was doubly sewn in the upper and lower parts to make it more resistant to wearing.

The ornamental motives that decorated the collar were always geometrical. A *feather buttonhole* (*cheotoare*) was fixed in front of the collar, for the women to fix their holiday flowers on the shirts.

There are three main elements that characterize the ornamentally sewn *ciupag*: the technique, the ornamental motives and the colours.

The technique was most difficult and required experience and skill that not all the women possessed.[5] The ornamental motives sewn on the *ciupag* have always been geometrical, with a predominance of the lozenge and the X-shape, but also with other ancient decorative elements that are part of the traditional ornamentics repertory and are common to all the Romanian areas: cosmic motives (*the star*), tool-shaped (*chain link, little rake, pitchfork, pit-bucket*), zoomorphic (*ram's horns*), vegetal (*branch, leaf*) and symbolic (*cross*).

According to dimensions, the *ciupag* had many local variants, the most numerous in the areas of the Apuseni Mountains and the Huedin-Călăţele Depression.

The decorative composition on the sleeves was unitary all over the circulation area, except for the villages in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression, where the ornamentation of the sleeves used to be extremely rich.

The main decorative fields on the sleeves are: the horizontally placed sewn motives at the elbows of the sleeves (called *rows, feathers* or *forms across the elbow*), the bracelet that separates the sleeve from the flounce known as *fodor* in the whole area and the sewn motives on the margin of the flounce.

The rows across the elbow and *the forms* on the margins of the flounce were sewn on the inside or on the outside of the shirt using the oldest technique (*on the thread*) or they could be woven with black and red cotton and later with other colours. Sometimes, the decorative fields on the sleeves were sewn with polychrome small beads.

The *bracelet* – also called *lănceţ, trăsură* etc. – would be made in the same way as the *ciupag*, by creasing the rims of the pleats and it was ornamented with the same motives used to ornament the breast of the shirt. One centimeter narrow, the bracelet would be doubly sewn at the lower margin for the same practical reasons as in the case of the collar.

The flounce ended with a pierced hem and lace that was frequently called *cipcă*.

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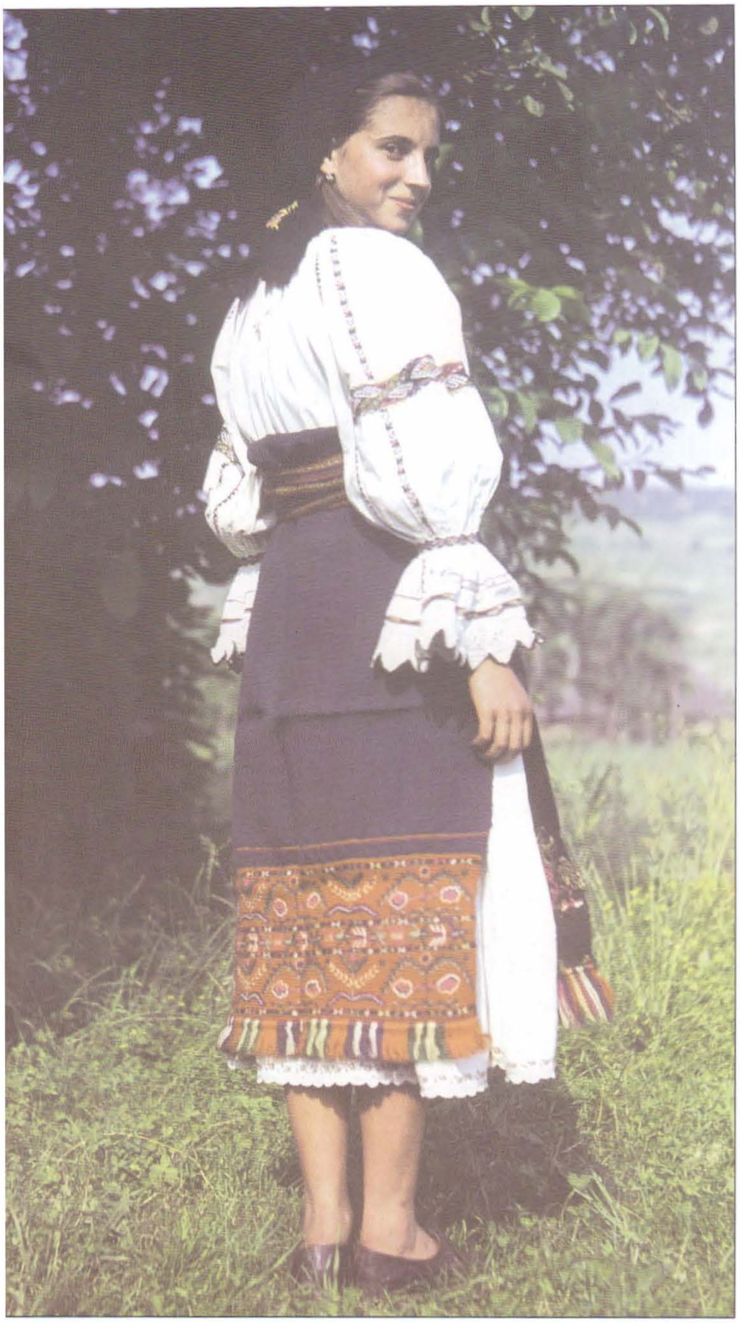
[5] Nicolae Dunăre, *Influenţe reciproce în portul şi textilele populare de pe ambele versante ale Carpaţilor Meridionali* (*Mutual Influences in Folk Costume and Textiles on both Mountainsides of the Southern Carpathians*), pp. 191-194.

The collar, the *ciupag* and the sleeves would be sewn separately before the shirt was finished. After all the pieces were ornamented, women would assemble the pieces by artistic sewing and they made the bracelet that separated the sleeve from the flounce.

The second stage in the evolution of this type of shirt was the cutting of the neck-slide in the front and the disappearance of the *ciupag*. Nevertheless, the decorative composition of the sleeve, which was characteristic to the shirt with *ciupag*, was preserved: the shirts had the same rows across the elbows, rows on the flounces and lace at the end of the *fodor*.



***Năframă**, shirt with **şire** across the elbows and flounces and **zadie** with dark blue body (Lăpuş)*

The *catrinţă* or *zadie* is the second defining piece for the female costume in Ardeal. The *zadie* is a rectangular textile material worn on the length and with variable dimensions according to the height of the woman who wore the costume.

Fixed around the waist by girdles, *the zadie with dark blue body* was initially worn in pairs, one in the front and one in the back. Later, women would wear a *zadie* in the back and an apron in the front.

As in the case of the shirt with *ciupag*, the *zadie* has many local-zonal variants determined mainly by the proportioning of the two ornamental-chromatic fields: the upper field, called *body* in the entire area and which is dark blue at older pieces and black at the newer ones, and the lower field, known as *tureac* (Lăpuş and the Apuseni Mountains), *toiag* (Sălaj), *pe la poală* (Huedin), *capăt* or *tureac* (Bistriţa-Năsăud), which has a red, dark red or orange-red background and horizontal rows of decoration.

The zonal variants are determined both by the manner of associating the ornamental motives in diverse compositions and colours and by the varied techniques used to decorate the costume pieces, which have turned each *zadie* into a unique piece of folk artistry.

The balance of the ornamental composition for the dark blue *zadie* is based on a large non-decorated surface and on the powerful contrast between the two chromatic fields: dark blue and red. Women would make the archaic *zadie* of hair (wool with long and tightly spun threads) until the middle of the 19th century and the result had a rigid aspect. The women would dye the wool in the house, obtaining two colours: dark blue with violet shades (called *mnierăi*) (out of blue stone) and black (out of alder bark or walnut leaf and copperas).

The older *zadii* are warped with dark blue threads and later with blue threads or the material was woven with black warp and dark blue filling. The threads used for decoration would be dyed in many colours, according to the ornamental composition, the zonal chromatic tradition and the age of the wearer.

Beginning with the second half of the 19th century, the *zadii* started to be made of bought materials: the black cotton for the warp and the soft coloured wool (called *bercă*, *haras* or, *ponivă*) for the filling.

According to the dimension of the body of the *zadie*, which could represent 1/2, 3/4, or 4/5 of the total surface of the piece, numerous local-zonal variants with their own particular features have been devised.

The prototype of the dark blue *zadie* is characterized by a simple structure and reduced ornamentation with a simple decoration of three or five narrow coloured stripes (green, yellow), called *coade*. This term has come to name the whole costume piece, which is also called *zadie codită* in the Apuseni Mountains and in the zones of Năsăud and Lăpuş. The decoration made of cross streaks placed on the lower part of the *zadie* on a dominantly red background would set a strong contrast with the simple, monochrome, dark blue body of the costume piece.

The next stage in the evolution of the *zadie* was the introduction of the woven geometrical forms: *crosses, horseshoes or chain links* that adorned the wider streaks and determined the new term, *zadie with forms*, as the ornamental motives were called *forms*.

In time, the dark blue body of the *zadie* is preserved only in the Apuseni Mountains and in Sălaj district, but it is reduced to a 15-25 centimetres wide portion called *girdle* (*brâu*). The decoration becomes orange-red and the old streaks are symmetrically distanced on a more extended ornamental field with woven decorations.

The different proportioning of the two ornamental and chromatic fields of the *zadie* occurs also in the Lăpuş area, where the recent *zadii* have a reduced dark blue body and an ample decoration that covers almost half of the piece.

The change of the ornamental system coincided with the use of different materials to make the *zadie* and the decorative composition.

While in the past the ornamental motives, associated in numerous combinations, would be made of thinly spun sheep wool, later other decorative materials were used: polychrome soft wool, golden and silver metallic thread, pailletes (sequins) and small coloured beads. An interesting manner of wearing the *catrinţă* on holidays and during the round dance in Mureş and Năsăud zones is by positioning the front cover on the right leg (on one hip), *for pride*. Coquette women in the zones of Mureş and Lăpuş would wear the back *zadie* raised over the waist up to the middle of the back and would fold one of its corners, fixing it in the girdle.[6]

The different techniques used to create woven decorations were called: *among threads, over threads, in lătunoi, with cuts, with dupci.*[7]

The oldest *zadii* are those with woven decorations that created a remarkable artistic effect. Those sewn with *dupci* or *bercă* are of a more recent provenience. Some pieces are decorated by using different techniques and their artistic value is thus amplified.

The width of the decorative margin varies from one zone to another and even from one piece to another. Initially, the chromatic background of decoration was red in the whole area and was woven with the shuttle.

The decorative composition would be positioned in ranges placed on parallel-horizontal axes and the woven streaks would alternate with the free spaces, which were coloured in different nuances of red and rarer in dark blue, sometimes crossed by polychrome streaks. Other *catrinţe* have a meandering string with sequins across the spaces empty of ornament.

The streaks were woven by hand, *in the fingers*, at first with thinly spun wool and then with coils of coloured *bercă* called *jowls* (*guşe*) that gave the whole piece the name of *catrinţă guşată* (*jowled catrinţă*).

The number of decorative ranges would always be odd (3-5-7-9) and they varied in size and pattern, some of them being main ranges (centrally positioned and wider) and others secondary ranges (more narrow, framing the main ones), while there were also border ranges (very narrow, simple or with woven decorations) that would mark the ends of the *catrinţă*.

The pattern of the main ranges could be the same and it would differ for the secondary streaks and for the border ones. The decorative ranges of different widths create an almost endless suite of ornamental variants displaying the same rules of composition: the patterns repeat, are symmetrical, alternate and create a rhythm specific to the whole Romanian folk art.

A compositional variant could have the woven streaks shaped as rectangular or square compartments with the same pattern. Only the chromatic background of the rectangles or squares in which the ornamental motives (for example, the stylized tree of life) were framed would be different.

A newer variant is the *catrinţă* with homogeneous compact decoration, without streaks and with a dense vegetal composition as ornament. The ornamented surface of the piece would be festooned all around with soft wool in the colours of the pattern on the *catrinţă*. Polychrome tassels or less frequently lace (wider at the laps and narrower on the lateral parts) would continue the festoon.

The ornamented field would be surrounded by a golden or silver cord at other pieces, to enhance the decorative effect of the piece.

From the chromatic point of view, the empty spaces between the decorative ranges had the same basic colours or would differ in nuance. The ornamental bands could also appear on differently nuanced backgrounds.

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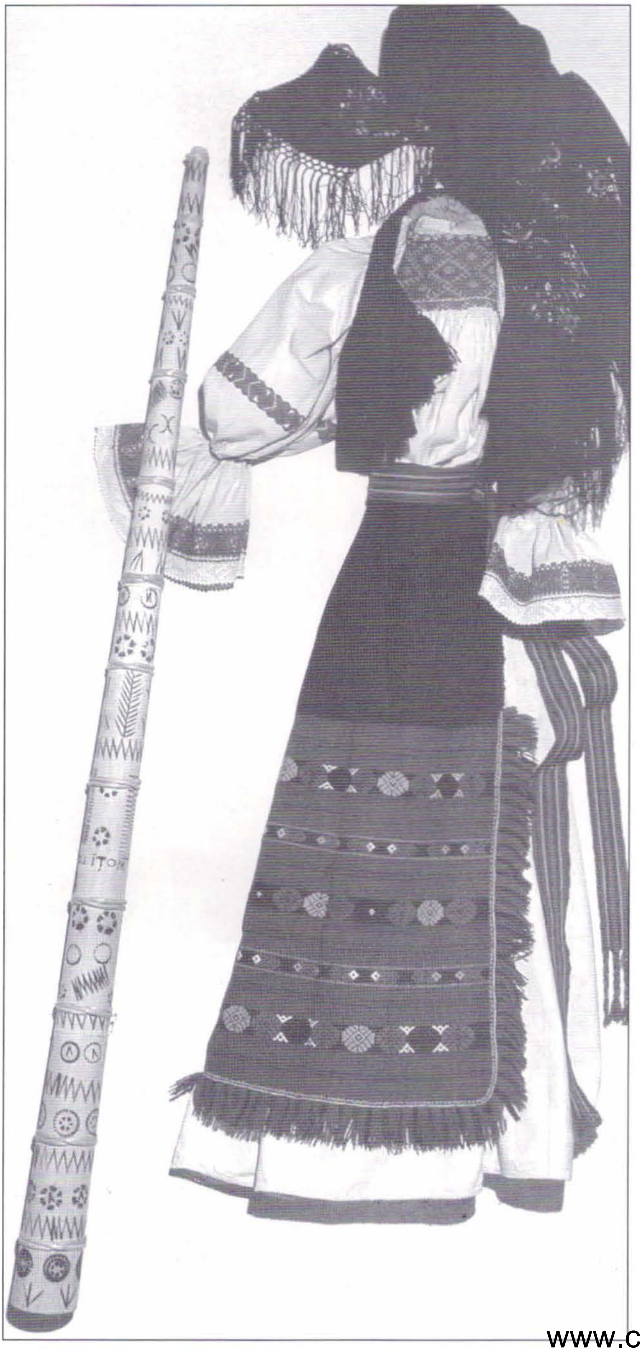
[6] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Portul popular din regiunea Maramureş. Zonele Oaş, Maramureş, Lăpuş* (*Folk Costume in the Maramureş Region. Zones Oaş, Maramureş, Lăpuş*), p. 141.

[7] Marina Marinescu, *Arta populară românească* (*The Romanian Folk Art*), p. 67.

An exclusively geometric decoration can be noticed on old *catrinţe* preserved in museum collections. This decoration is complex and diversified, containing solar and astral motives, abstract geometric motives, symbolic-religious motives, zoomorphic motives, bird- and tool-shape motives and also anthropomorphic motives. Many times, these stylized motives are combined with other categories of motives on the same piece and especially with stylized vegetal ornamentation creating a surprisingly plastic effect.

Each *catrinţă* is a construction of graphic and chromatic signs, a combination of proportions and rhythms. The ornamental motives have lost their magical-religious value but they preserve their absolute decorative meaning of an intrinsic beauty that moves the eye by its simplicity and spontaneity, by its corresponding shapes and colours.



The decorative composition of the dark blue *zadie* does not present essential distinctions from one zone to another, the differences springing out from the plastic language selected and the manner of artistic expression. Many of the ornamental motives that appear on the shirt with *ciupag* are also present in the decorative composition of the dark blue *zadie*, as the female costume with the two pieces demonstrates an impressive stylistic unity.

The bright red background contrasts with the dark body of the *catrinţă*, creating remarkable aesthetic valences and an outstanding balance and harmony of the structural, chromatic and decorative elements. Some *catrinţe* excel by an explosion of colour but the dosage of chromatic accents always creates very refined pieces. The chromatic range has constantly marked the differences of age, civil status, occasions and the zonal and ethnic inclusions.

The women at the western feet of Bihor Mountains would wear the oldest *zadii* – called *zaprege* – on holidays. *The zaprege* were costume pieces similar to the dark blue *catrinţe*. They were woven of blue-grey or black dyed wool and the sewn decorations with polychrome soft wool were concentrated only on the lower parts of the pieces. The nuances used for decorations were predominantly rose, yellow and light green.

The specialists have remarked the great similitude of the *zapreg* with the old Romanian *zadie*[8] illustrated in stamps, as the two pieces are characterized by the same proportioning of the chromatic composition and organization of the decorative composition: the body of the *zadie* is blue-grey or black and the polychrome decoration is placed on the lower part of the piece.

We should underline that the shirt of the costume in Bihor district has cuffs (*pumnari*) with the archaic sewing *on the rims of the pleats.*

All these aspects encourage the hypothesis that the spreading area of the costume with shirt with *ciupag* and the *zadie* with dark blue body was much larger in the past and the costume in Bihor may be another zonal variant of this type of clothing.

The manner of wearing different elements of the female costume represented an indication as to the age of a woman in the traditional rural community.

At first, young and old wives would wear the *zadii* in pairs. As the ethnographic bibliography and field research demonstrate, girls wore just a front *zadie* and

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[8] Valeriu Butură, *Evoluţia portului popular în sectorul răsăritean al Munţilor Apuseni Apuseni (The Evolution of the Folk Clothing in the Eastern Sector of the Apuseni Mountains)*, p. 232.

← *Folk costume from Huedin*

when this costume piece was replaced by the apron, they wore only aprons over the white laps of their shirts.

It is interesting to remark that certain costume pieces in the traditional costume have been preserved much longer after their wearing out of daily use in the ceremonial clothing. For example, at Sălciua (at the middle of the Arieş Valley, in the Apuseni Mountains), the *zadie* with dark blue body became a ceremonial piece and the brides would wear only a front *zadie* over their white laps.[9]

As they had distinct ritual roles, the *zadii* were preserved in the folk costumes of old women up to the fourth decade of the 20th century, unlike the shirt with *ciupag* that got out of use ever since the end of the 19th century.

The replacing of the front dark blue *zadie* by the apron was a general phenomenon characteristic to the whole spreading area of the female folk costume composed of the two defining pieces (the shirt with *ciupag* and the dark blue *zadie*).

Initially, the apron (called *şurţ* locally and *zadie* in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression) was made of black hair (wool) and had no ornamentation. It was woven in the techniques with 2-3-4 or 5 threads and was cut of one, two or three widths of the material. Women would wear it straight or pleated (on the *beartă*) around the waist and hanging in big, free folds (with *creţe*).

Young women of Mureş district would wear red woollen aprons. A three-coloured sewing would adorn it along the middle. The lower margin would be ornamented here and there with black lace or decorative silver passement and sequins, in the same way as the *ceapsă*.

The aprons worn by the young married women in the Mureş and Bistriţa-Năsăud districts were adorned on the laps with black lace in Mureş and with white and polychrome lace in the Şieu-Şieuţ Depression.

Women would wear woollen aprons especially at work. On holidays they would wear aprons made of industrial textiles: velvet (*barşon*), silk (simple or with floral print), fine cloth (*anglie*), thick satin (*moson*) or black *glot*.

Except for the Huedin-Călăţele Depression, the area of the shirt with *ciupag* and *zadie* with dark blue body is characterized by the wearing of woven girdles (*bete*, called *frâmbii*, *frânghii-ropes* or *brăcină* in Mureş and the Transylvanian Plain. These 5-6 centimetres narrow and 150-200 centimetres long *bete* would be woven of wool. In the Apuseni Mountains, women would weave them using just the threads in the loom and they would arrange the texture with a beech-wood knife.

The decorations of the *bete* in the Lăpuş area were polychrome stripes and small woven patterns on the length of the material and the *bete* in Bistriţa-Năsăud and the Transylvanian Plain would be decorated with a line rainbow pattern. Women in Mureş district used to wear three-coloured soft wool (*bercă*) girdles.

The *bete* were also on sale at fairs. They were woven of cotton and were named *brâneţe* in Bistriţa-Năsăud district and *cingători* or *brâu* in the Apuseni Mountains. As they were long, women would circle their waist with *bete* many times, forming a wide girdle.

Women in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression did not wear *bete*; they would fix the *zadie* on the waist with straps (*baere*) made of multicoloured wool filaments and attached of the upper part of the *zadie*.

The category of leg-protecting pieces was closely related to the geographic and climatic conditions and to the occupations of the inhabitants in different Romanian villages.

A costume piece of old tradition was the white wool legging (*obială*), fixed with horse or goat hair threads, with leather straps or black woollen threads. Another archaic piece that combined later with the leggings and with the knitted woollen stockings was the *cioarec* that wrapped the leg only from ankle to knee. In the area that we are discussing, the *cioareci* would be cut of white frieze and they covered the women's knees.

The peasant traditional footwear was the *opincă*, which was cut of a single piece of leather. The *opinci with gurgui* (marked top) were made of pig or cattle skin and they were tied to the legs by leather straps, wool black threads or goat hair or tow.

The well-off women would wear high boots made by craftsmen. The local boots would be red and have soft bootlegs and the decorations would be placed on the bootlegs, heels and front parts. The boots were made of calf or goat leather, had horseshoes and they were ornamented with yellow studs, buttons and flowers on the heels. Later, the red leather boots were replaced by the black ones. Women would buy them at fairs, among which the most famous was the fair at Reghin.

On holidays, the female folk costume would be completed by ornaments: four-five rows of coloured glass beads or beads made of white, rose or blue porcelain.

The well-off women would wear expensive jewels like the necklaces (*zgărzi*) made of several rows of Austrian silver coins (crowns, zlotys) that reflected most obviously their material condition.

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[9] Valeriu Butură, *Evoluţia portului popular în sectorul răsăritean al Munţilor Apuseni Apuseni (The Evolution of the Folk Clothing in the Eastern Sector of the Apuseni Mountains)*, p. 232.

The male costume in the area of the female costume with shirt with *ciupag* and dark blue *zadie* is formed of the basic pieces of the costume on the Romanian territory that got particular features by local elements of cut, decoration and chromatics.

The cap had two forms: the high pointed cap and the short round cap, both types made of lamb fur. In the summer, men in the Sălaj district wore straw hats with very high calottes. Straw hats and felt hats with large rims were frequent for the male summer costume in the area and young men would adorn them on holidays with bands (*zgărdane*) of polychrome, small beads.

At first, men would wear straight shirts over their trousers, with large free sleeves and without collar and then they started to wear the shirt with high, straight or turned up collar and with sleeves pleated at the shoulders and ended with cuffs (*pumnaşi*) around the wrists.

Men in the Transylvanian Plain and in the Mocănime area in the Apuseni Mountains would frequently wear the shirts with *barburi* (gores intercalated in the middle of the front and back pieces of the shirt, ending in the shape of the letter M). The newer variant of shepherd shirt with mostly orange rich ornaments sewn on the collar, on the *barburi*, on the shoulders, cuffs and laps, conferred to the male costume a very elegant look.

The summer trousers (called *gaci* locally) are very large, looking like a pleated shirt and they are ornamented by small sewn patterns made with cotton and by tassels or fringes that end the warp. The white frieze *cioareci* woven in the technique of the four threads and processed in the fulling mill have circulated in the area in two variants: a large one, with each leg made of two widths of frieze and a tight one (in the Transylvanian Plain and the Năsăud zone). Along the sewing that united the two parts of the *cioareci* ornamentations of red and black cloth were applied. Sometimes, decorative elements could also be placed on the lower hem of the *cioareci*.

The characteristic belt for the male folk costume was the *chimir*, a wide leather belt adorned with brass disks and tin studs that served also as support for pipe, tobacco, flint, tinder and money.

The category of winter overcoats made of woolen materials and sheep fur presents a great morphologic and decorative unity in the entire area of circulation of the costume with shirt with *ciupag* and *zadie* with dark blue body.

The wool woven cloth (frieze) coats named *pănură* in the whole area and *sumani* in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression have evolved out of the archaic basic type of the *poncho*.[10]

The most frequent was the *suman*, a coat with the sleeves fixed at the shoulders. It had lateral gores named *wings* and it could be named *suman with gores*. The *gores* that started from under the armpits were attached by the sleeves by the help of some very large pieces of cloth called *pave*.

Usually, coats were made of woollen cloths in natural colours (black, grey, brown) especially black which could be obtained by dying the cloth with an alder bark concoction.

The sewn patterns with strings or white thread (*spăcmă*) were frequent ornamentations in the area. The ornaments were positioned on the collar, gores, and the margins of the sleeves, breast and the laps. The lateral gores were the most ornamented.

The *suman* in the spreading area we are discussing is cut and ornamented in a similar way with the *suman* in the north of Moldavia.

The *suman* was ornamented with *sarad* (a thick string made of three braided woollen filaments) and ornamented with spiraled motives and it was called *suman sărăduit*. The chromatic relation of the background and decoration was a combination of tone over tone.

The woollen cloth for the *suman* (approximately 3 metres for each overcoat) was made in the household and then it was processed at the fulling mill. Then the local specialized craftsmen would cut and ornament the *suman*.

The *suman* had a straight collar around the neck and very long sleeves and was buttoned up at the neck.

The manners of wearing the *suman* were quite varied in the Mureş district. The old women would put it on their shoulders ("between the shoulders"), pushing the sleeves towards the back. There were slides in the pockets of the *suman*, through which the wearers could put out their hands. People in other settlements in Mureş would dress up the *suman* on one sleeve and they would throw the other sleeve over their shoulder.

The different cuts would vary according to the name of the piece. The *suman sărăduit with wings* was simply called *suman* in the Şieu-Şieuţ Depression, while the straight *suman* without gores was called *guib*. Well-off people would usually wear the *suman sărăduit*.

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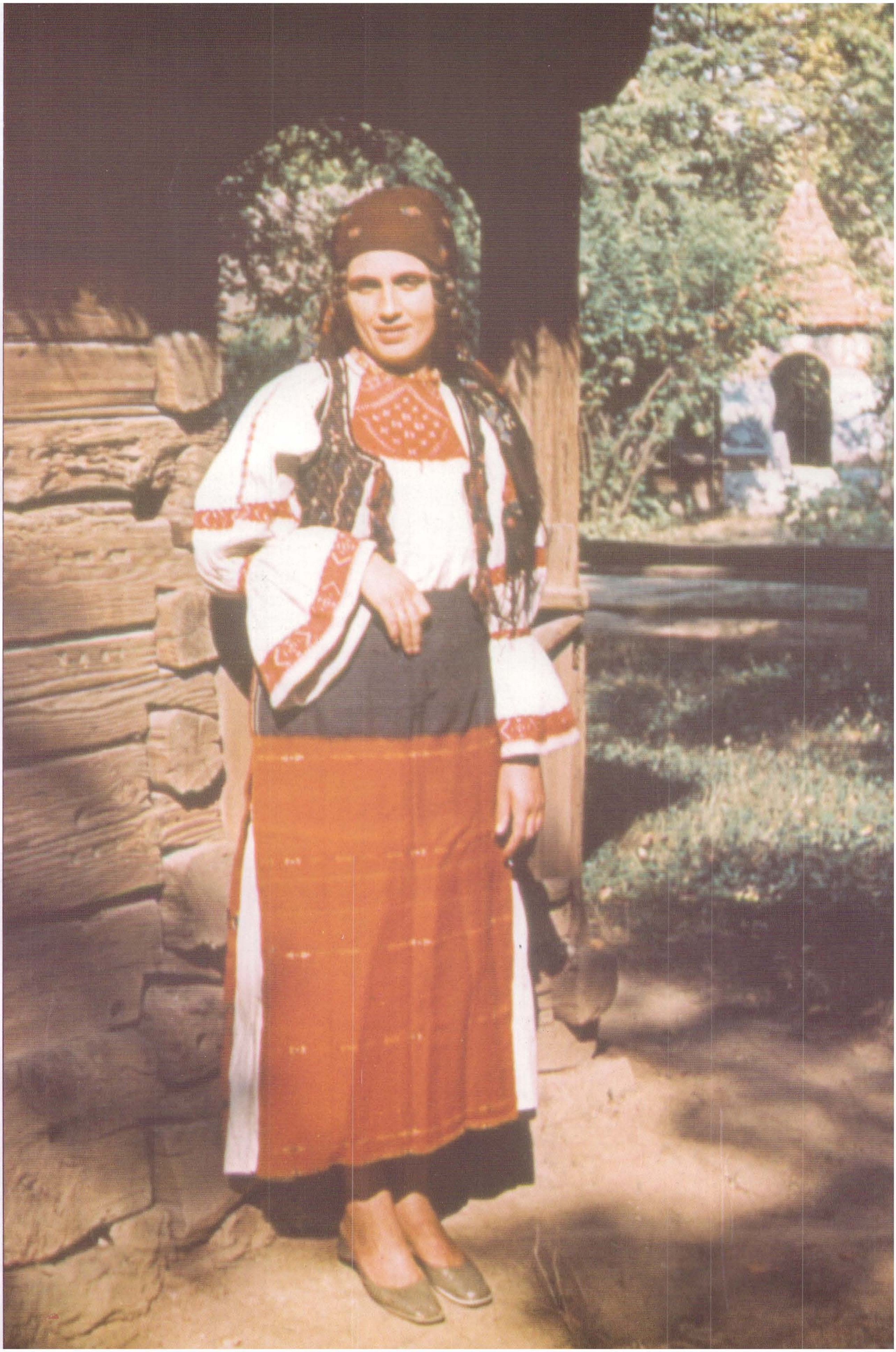
[10] Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular din România (The Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 134.

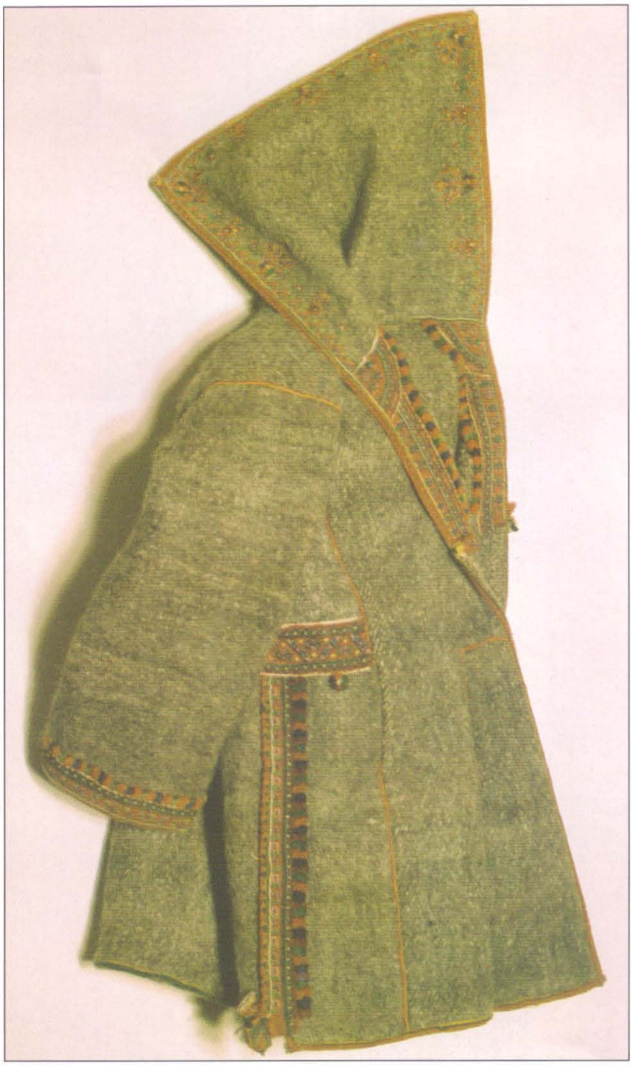
Folk costume: ***năframă***, *shirt with* ***ciupag*** *and* ***zadie*** *with dark blue body (the Apuseni Mountains)* →



The old *suman* in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression was differently decorated. It had a black or grey background on which a kind of zigzagged pattern with white thread (*spăcmă*) was sewn where the widths of material were united on the sides. The *suman* in the entire area was knee-long.

People in the middle of the Arieş Valley would wear the elegant and distinguished white *ţundră* with gores. This was an ample coat cut of 5 metres of frieze and with long sleeves that were hanging freely and were not dressed. People would wear it over their shoulders and tie it under the chin.[11] Later this coat was replaced by the *ţundră* ornamented on the margins with red and black cloth trimmings and on the gores and sleeves with different patterns (*forms*).

The specialized furriers would cut, sew and embroider the skin that served to make fur coats. The two basic types, the waistcoat and the sheepskin coat were frequent in the area and they were even worn together on certain occasions.



Suman *from the Sălaj zone*

The waistcoat circulated in two variants: sewn up and partly open. The sewn up waistcoat for holidays had a round neck-cut and it was richly decorated with vegetal motives placed on the breast fields and on the back and made with coloured threads of *bercă* (wool), but mostly with black or red silk threads. The background colours were brightened up by nuances of yellow and blue.

The sewn up waistcoat in the districts Bistriţa-Năsăud and Mureş was adorned with silk *canaci* (tassels). It was expensive and mostly the well-off people would wear such costume pieces.

The decoration of the partly open waistcoat included polychrome silk embroideries, predominantly with floral motives positioned on the breast and the back.

The waistcoat in the Huedin-Călăţele Depression would be ornamented by embroideries made with coloured or dyed cotton thread on white *irhă* (leather). Applications of zigzagged *irhă* would adorn the cut of the sleeves, with floral and spiraled motives.

The women in the area would wear also the waistcoat long down to the hips, with lateral triangular gores (*cline*) that were inserted from the armpit to the lower margin of the waistcoat and gave it the flaring shape which looked so elegant. This type of waistcoat would be adorned with black lamb fur trimmings all around and it was sewn with *harast* or polychrome *bercă*.

The long waistcoats with gores in Mureş district were an obligatory piece during the wedding ceremony. They were extremely expensive and available only for the rich.

In the Huedin-Călăţele Depression, this type of waistcoat would be decorated with *irhă* applications, stapled and laced at the margins and with embroideries made of brown and green straps of *irhă* and completed with threads of black, green and red wool.

The hip-long sheepskin coats, adorned in the same way as the waistcoats, would be worn in the whole area of the costume with shirt with *ciupag* and *zadie* with dark blue body.

At the Reghin fair, the women would buy three-quarter sheepskin coats, with gores and very elegant because of the embroideries sewn with red silk and continued with tassels. The decoration could always be made of applications with stapled *irhă* that had imprinted patterns. The silk tassels would be again the main decorative element for this ornamental variant, completing the embroidered motives.

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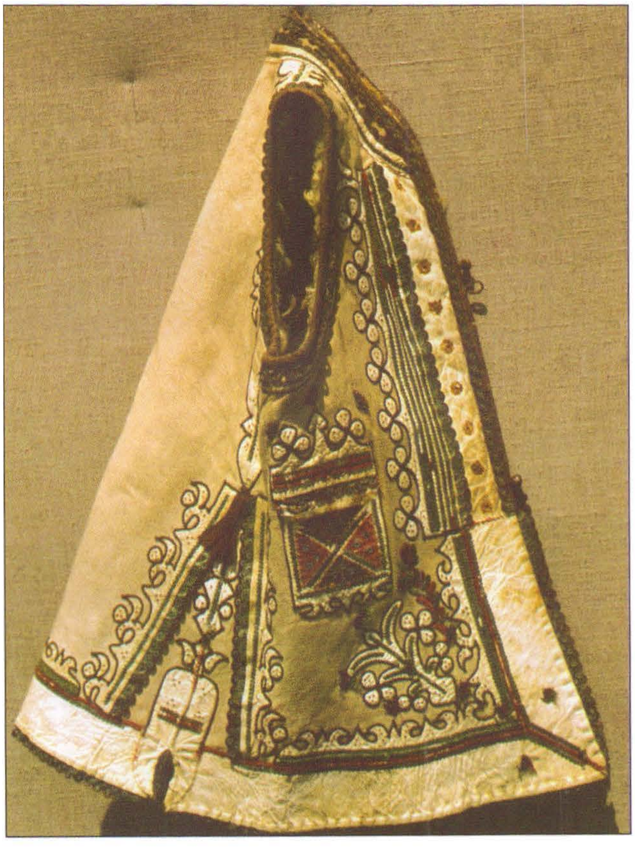
[11] Lucia Apolzan, *Portul şi industria casnică textilă din Munţii Apuseni (Costume and Textile Household Industry in the Apuseni Mountains)*, p. 170.

The women in the middle of the Arieş Valley wore long sheepskin coats decorated with spiraled forms drawn by hand on *irhă* with an ink pen and then applied on the coat and fixed with *pap* (a mixture of flour and water). The craftsman sewd with dyed cotton thread along the drawn lines, attaching the pieces of *irhă* to the coat. The embroideries were made with thick soft cotton and the coat had a black fur collar.[12]

The waistcoat and the sheepskin coat had a ceremonial function in the Apuseni Mountains, as the young men were obliged to wear sheepskin coats (in the winter) or waistcoats (in the summer) at their wedding.[13]

The fur coats as well as the woollen cloth coats have dignified harmoniously the traditional costume with their remarkable aesthetic value.

The type of costume composed of the shirt with *ciupag* and the dark blue *zadie*, made of specific material and with specific ornamentation, was widespread on a large area for many centuries. It reflects the aesthetic traditions, the forms of artistic expression, the mentality and plastic conception of the people who created it in a certain age. This type of costume reached the peak of circulation in the first half of the 19th century when its zonal variants – briefly crayoned in the previous pages – were fully constituted with their original features.



Sheepskin coat (the Apuseni Mountains)

The typology of the costume with two *catrinţe* also includes the costumes from Ţara Haţegului, Pădurenii Hunedoarei, Mărginimea Sibiului, the Land of Olt, the zone of the Târnave, Bucium in the Apuseni Mountains and Maramureş.

The Land of Haţeg and Pădurenii Hunedoarei are two extremely conservative areas that have preserved for a long time the traditional social and cultural models, among which the custom of wearing the folk costume on holidays and at important family ceremonies like weddings.

I have researched the Land of Haţeg – a foundation centre of the Romanian people – from Sarmizegetusa and Clopotiva until Peşteana, Ḍensuş and Strei and I looked for the old traditional pieces of the folk costume of Haţeg that assert the historic documentary value of this costume.

The traditional costume of the women in Haţeg impressed especially by the archaic headdress with *sucituri* that consisted of twisting the hair on both sides of the middle parting in thin strands (up to 20 strands) that were placed one beside the other and they were turned below the ears so as to be visible under the textile head cover. The strands would be sewn on the *conci*, an obligatory support for rural women, which was made of wire (*drot*) or of wood with two prominences that were smaller as the woman would grow older. The *ceapsă* was placed over the *conci*; the former was a small bonnet with two lateral prominences and with a basis ornamented with geometrical motives sewn with wool or soft wool thread, dyed cotton and metallic thread. The decorative value of the *ceapsă* was amplified by the ornamental elements on its margins: lace, beads and small coins.

On holidays and *nedei* (open air rural parties occasioned by religious holidays) the women would cover their *ceapsă* with the *propoadă*, a white three-metre long rectangular head cover.

In the past, the archaic hairdos with horns and supports or annex pieces in the shape of horns were widespread on a large cultural area, as researchers demonstrate.[14] The same hairdo is common to women belonging to many European and Asian peoples, which turns it into an element of a shared cultural background.

The old shirt of Haţeg, with the *stani* (body) and the sleeves pleated around the neck, has preserved up to the present the ingenious systems of enlarging the

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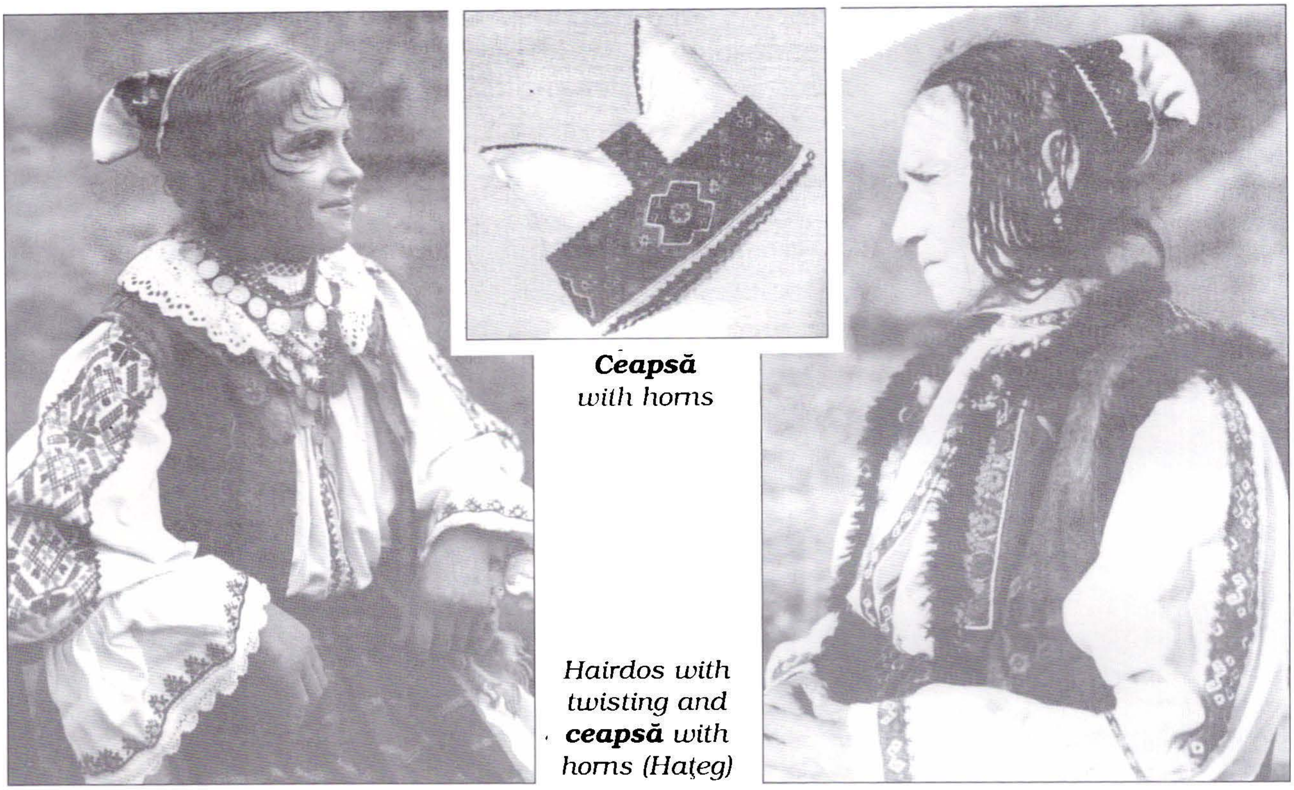
[12-13] Lucia Apolzan, *Portul şi industria casnică textilă din Munţii Apuseni* (*Costume and Textile Household Industry in the Apuseni Mountains*), p. 164.

[14] I. Chelcea, *Portul cu coarne* (*The Headdress with Horns*), p. 107.



Ceapsă with horns

Hairdos with twisting and **ceapsă** with horns (Haţeg)

piece; an *enlargement* made of half of a sheet of cloth (20 centimetres) was introduced under the armpit, starting from the waist and ending at the wrist; between the back sheet and the enlargement a triangular patch was inserted, called *broşchiţă in three corners* and sewn with black dyed cotton. Another obligatory element was the *pavă* – a square piece of cloth with sides of 10 centimetres, called *broşchiţă* and introduced between the basis of the sleeve and the top of the enlargement.

The sleeves were cut of one sheet of cloth and a half and they ended with a big *fodor* (flounce), creased with a cuff (*pumnaş*) that could be sewn "over the pleats" (in the technique of the *ciupag*) and named *bracelet* (*brăţarie*) or *crease* (*creţură*). The creasing of the flounce could also be obtained by overlapping a narrow band of cloth (2 centimetres) over the pleats. This was called *collar of pumnaş* and sewn with "buds".

The laps were united with the *stani* of the shirt and they were cut of two straight sheets and two or four gores (*cliciuri*) that were creased on the hips. The festive shirts were ornamented with "buds".

The sheets of the shirt were united by a special red and black dyed cotton thread sewing called *little flea.*

The narrow collar would be attached to the shirt by a seam called *butuceală* and the neck slide almost as long as the whole trunk would be buttoned up with *ceutori.* The decorative fields were placed on the collar (sewn "on the inside" with black dyed cotton thread and filled with a little red, blue and dark blue thread), on the *bracelet* or *crease* under the collar (geometrical motives sewn "over the pleats" with thick black or red dyed cotton thread), on both sides of the neck slide as narrow bands called *sheets* (4 centimetres) and on the sleeves.

Among the many systems of ornamenting the sleeves, two were the oldest and the most frequent: with *table* – a tubular compact sewing that would cover the exterior surface of the sleeves from the shoulder to the elbow and was worked "on the inside", with a black background filled with dark coloured tones: dark blue, brown, violet-green, red – and with *row over the shoulders* – a row of sewing placed on the shoulders.

The collar, the slide of the shirt and the margin of the flounce were strengthened by a sewing called *şânor.* The motives that decorated the collar of the shirt were sewn again in a single row on the margin of the flounce.

Considering the resistant material of which it was made (thick cloth of hemp or cotton) and the sober ornamentation without silk or bright metallic threads, sequins or beads, we can draw the conclusion that the shirt of Haţeg has preserved archaic elements and traditional techniques and decorative procedures.

The dimensions, ornamentation manner and chromatics imprinted the characteristic features of the pieces that covered the front and back laps of the female shirt.

Initially, the *catrinţă* of Haţeg was woven only of wool in the technique of the four threads. For the warm season pieces the warp would be of *urzeluţă* (a type of cotton) and the filling of dyed cotton thread. The *catrinţă* would be worn in two manners: straight, especially in the interference zone with Banat and more frequently as an apron with pleats (*pături*).

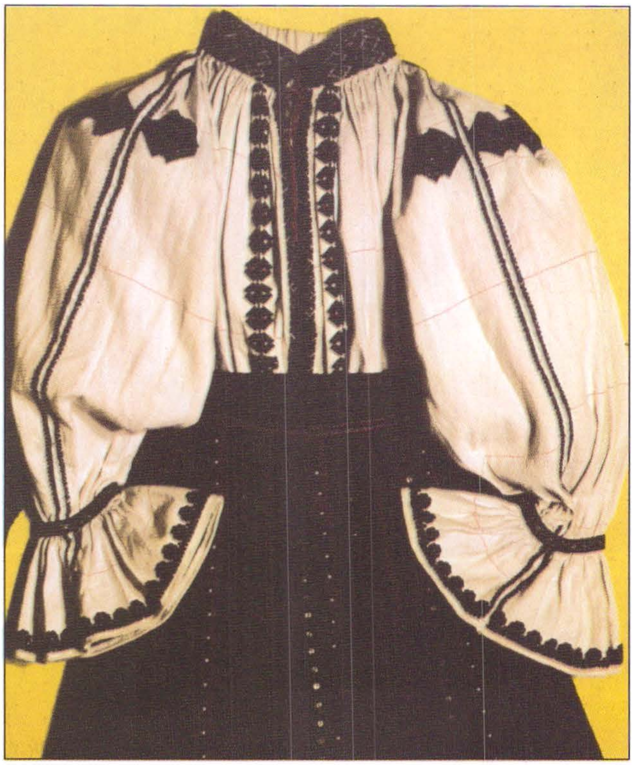
The front *catrinţă* was narrower and shorter than the back one and it was woven with motives made of four-five threads, representing mostly lozenges and squares called *păcele*. Towards the laps a horizontal band with coloured stripes (*viarga*) was placed. The sober chromatics would be composed of lighter nuances that those used for the back *catrinţă*. The lateral decoration was composed of *ciptă* (*lace*) and tassels were placed at the lower end.

The catrinţoi (back piece) was worked at the loom "in loops" and it was ornamented with vertical narrow (5 centimetres) coloured streaks obtained by beating the threads with the shuttle or by using alternatively the threads of the filling that made a rhythmic pattern of sober colours. Lace (*ciptă*) was used to adorn all around the sheet of material.

The women would fix the *catrinţoi* with the *girdle in sticks* (*brâul în bâte*), woven with an archaic technique and then with the *brăcină*. The front *catrinţă* was tied over the girdles (*brăcină* and *brâu*) in a manner specific for the Haţeg County.

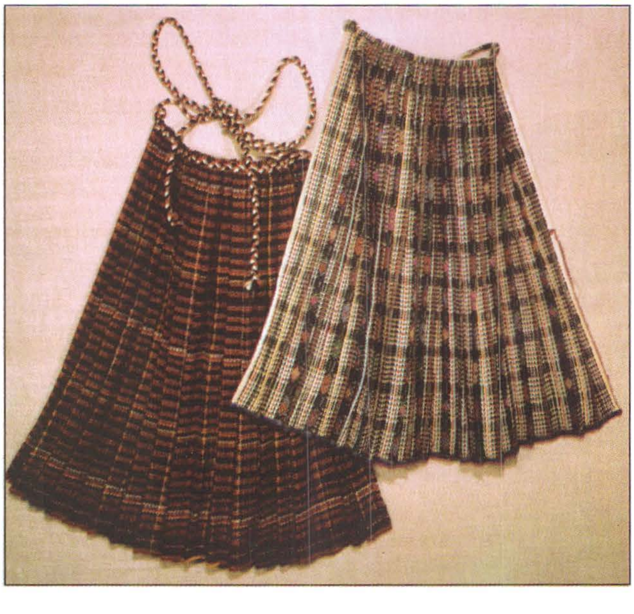
In the area near Banat, especially in the summer, the front *catrinţă* was associated to the *opreg with tassels*, with the upper part composed of a woollen piece woven in the technique of the four threads and called *petec* or *brâu* (patch or girdle) and with the lower part made of long tassels of twisted *hair* threads of different colours (red, green, yellow, white). The patch of the *opreg* was decorated by small red and black checkers resulted out of the crossing of the warp and filling threads that are homogeneously positioned on the surface of the material. A horizontal row of *buds* would be placed towards the lower part of the patch. This 2-3 centimetres wide row was predominantly or-namented with geometrical motives coloured in shades of black, red, white, yellow and dark blue. The tassels would be attached to the patch by a special sewing or knitting. The tasselled *opreg* was initially worn in pairs, in the front and in the back and it was part of the "pride" festive costume and of the ceremonial bride attire.

In the winter, women used to protect their legs by *colţuni* of motley (white and black, white and grey) *cioarec* (frieze), woven in the technique of four threads and with a sole. They would also wear *opinci* with turned up top (*gurgui*), made of tanned leather and tied over the *colţuni* with straps that were wrapped around the legs up to the knees. In the summer, they would wear wool stockings and *opinci*.



Shirt specific to Haţeg

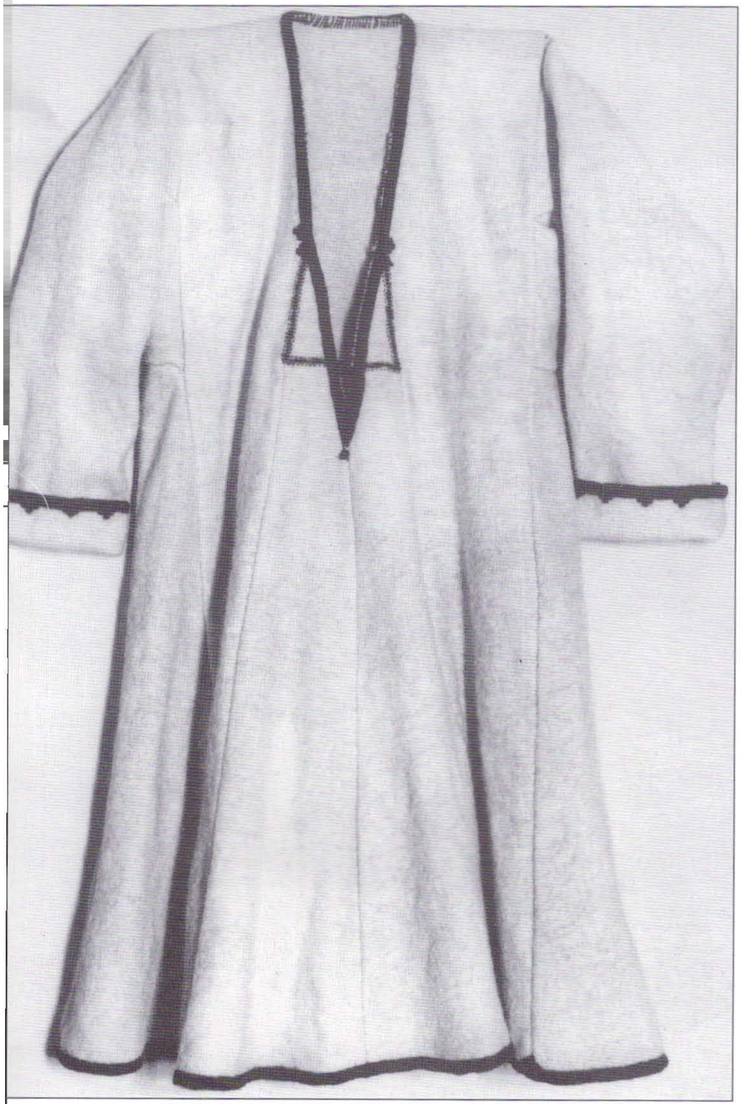
Another traditional piece of clothing that demonstrates the archaism of the female folk costume from Haţeg and which is common also to the areas Pădurenii Hunedoarei and the Jiu Valley is the sewn up *şubă*, which was a long coat with sleeves and a slide in the front to be put on over the head. People would wear it directly over the shirt on all occasions:



***Catrinţe** from Haţeg*

at work, during holidays, at the round dance or at the church. The sewn up *şubă* was made of white frieze and had eight lateral gores on each side. It would be decorated with *bărnaş* of different colour for every village and with coloured patterns sewn with red and dark blue wool. In some villages (Păucineşti, for example) the *şubă* was ornamented with a woven pattern called *brăciruie*. The *şubă* had lateral cuts *ghizde*) in the sewing that united the parts. When they danced, the women would put their hands in these cuts in order to ease their movements. They would wear over the *şubă* a girdle "in sticks" or a woollen *brăciră*, woven in the technique with two or four threads. The woven patterns on the *brăciră* had nuances of green, black, brown (*căfion*) and white.

After 1918, the sewn up *şubă* was replaced by the creased *şubă* (cut in the front) made of grey or white *cioarec*, long over the knee and decorated with black *şinor* (cord) on the breast, sleeves and laps.



Sewn-up **şubă** from Haţeg

Together with the hairdo with *twisting* (*sucituri*) and the *ceapsă with horns*, the sewn up *şubă* was a defining mark for women descending from the category of the serfs.[15]

The men in Haţeg would cover their heads with black cloth hats with narrow rim (*gardină*) which the unmarried young men would adorn with natural flowers and bead band on holidays. At winter time, they would wear white or black fur caps (*căiţe*) decorated with a peacock feather.

The distinctive mark of the male folk costume is the shirt with *barburi* which is also spread in the areas Mărginimea Sibiului, Jiu Valley and Târnave. Gores of the "barburi" kind were inserted in the middle of the front and back *stani* (sheets) of the shirt. Locally, these gores were named *gores with pitchfork* or *horned gores*.

The festive shirt had a simple cut, with *barburi* and three gores introduced under the armpits on each side. The sleeves were cut of one and a half sheets and they were tightened with very narrow cuffs (*pumnaşi*). The decoration of the work shirts was placed only on the collar and on the cuffs, while the festive shirts were ornamented on the breast, along the front gore, on the sleeves, along the shoulders and on the laps.

In the warm season, the shirt would be worn with thin cloth trousers ornamented at the lower margins with corners *beaten* with the needle or with lace. In winter, men would wear white frieze *cioareci*, tight on the legs and with a special cut determined by the inserting of the gores at the back.

There were also common clothes for men and women, among which we mention the waistcoats - sewn up or partly open - decorated with floral motives sewn with coloured wool thread on the dyed leather.

Men would wear long sheepskin coats with the wool on the outside and ankle long *laibere*, made of grey or white *cioarec* and twisted around the neck. These long coats had straight *enlargements* under the armpits and sleeves tightened with wooden buttons wrapped in *cioarec* and thread laces to be tied at the neck. The archaic, simple cut of this frieze coat is remarkable. The festive *laibere* were decorated with white or black *şinor* (cord).

The *laibăr* for women was waist short and made of white *cioarec*. It was cut around the neck, had sleeves and ornamentations of red or red and black *bărnaş*.

Female and male traditional clothing from Haţeg zone →

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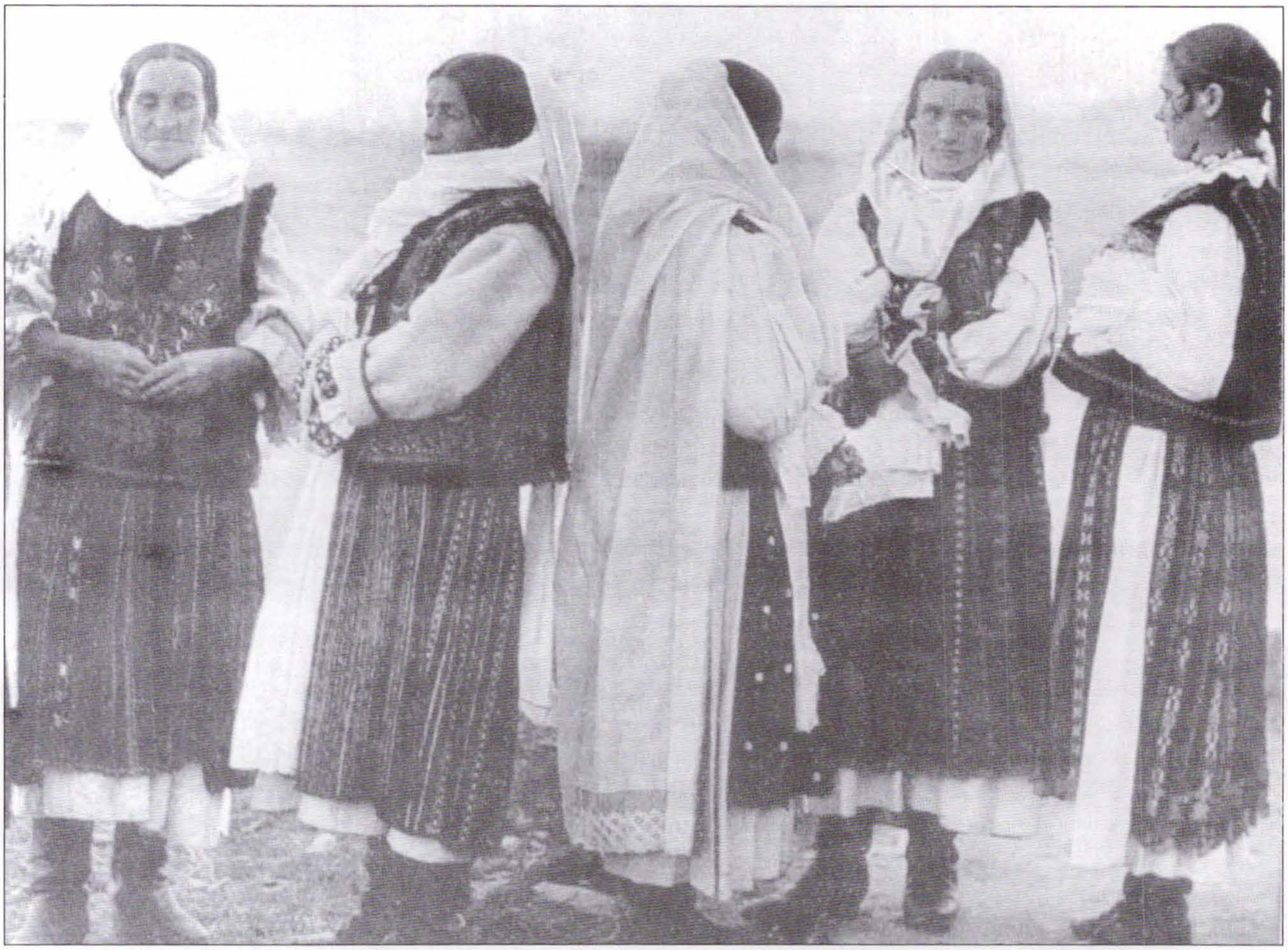
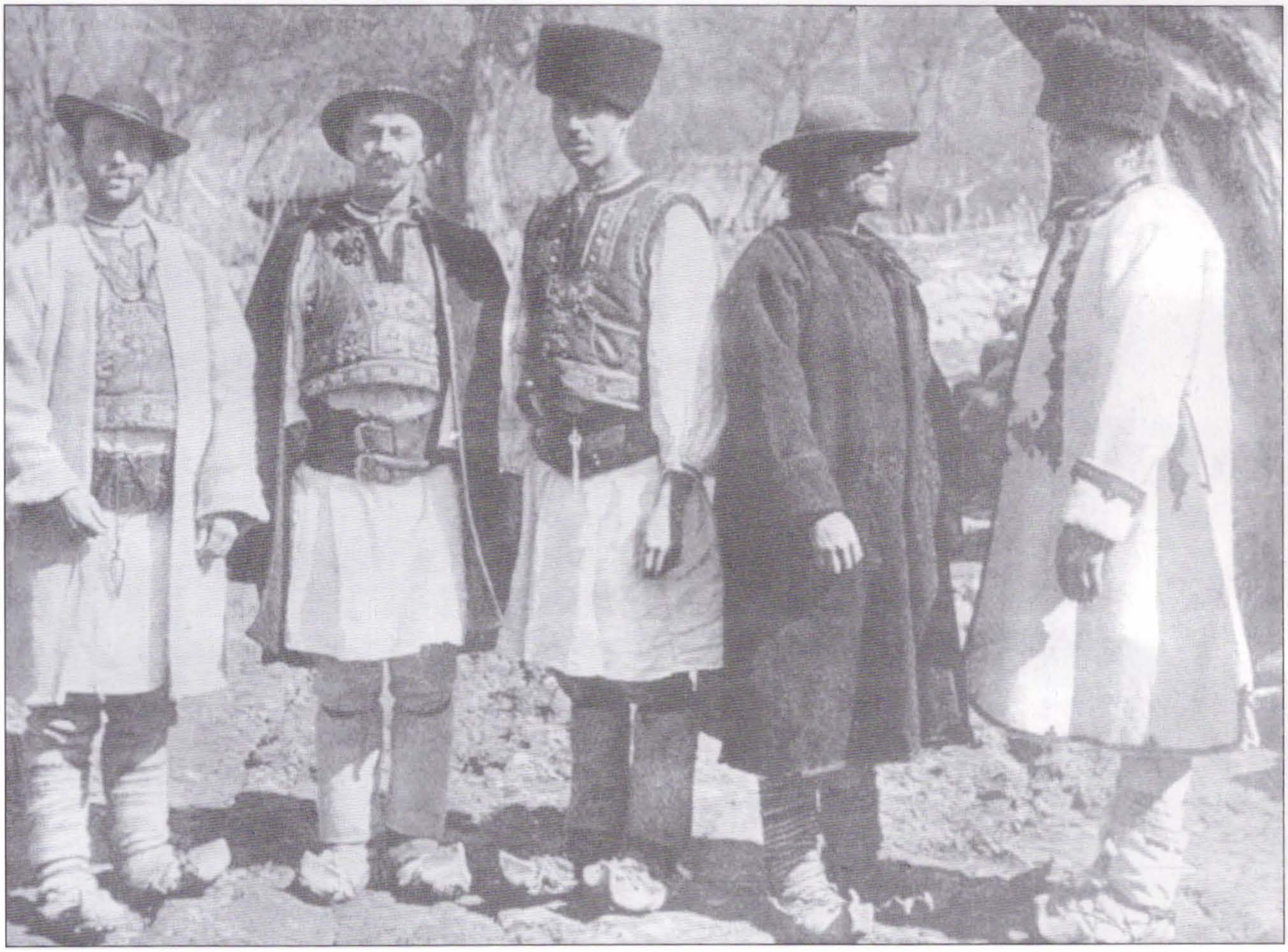
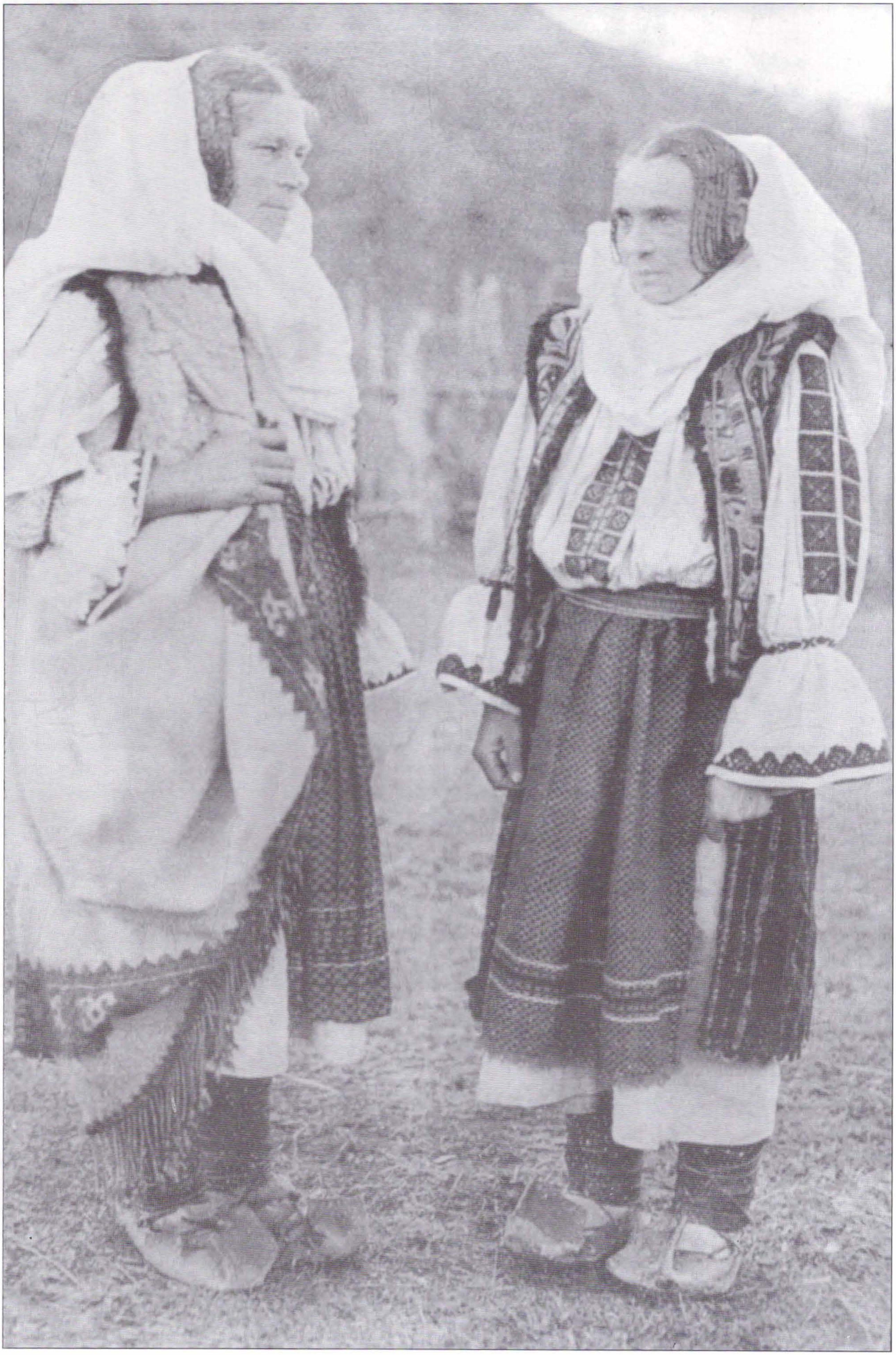
[15] Maria Bâtcă, *Însemn şi simbol în vestimentaţia ţărănească* (*Ensign and Symbol in the Folk Clothing*), p. 40.







The costume of the peasants in the Jiu Valley was very similar and sometimes identical to that of the "countrymen" in the Land of Haţeg.

After they married, women would part their hair in the middle and braid it into two *plete* to which they added the *pleteri* – supports made of wool dyed in the natural colour of the hair and braided into three strands that were placed along the plaits. Women in the settlements stretching from Câmpul lui Neag till Iscroni would wear two *pleteri* and those from Livezeni only one, to the left. Previous to the hairdo with *pleteri* was the same one that was practiced in the Land of Haţeg (with *suciturі*, iron *conci* in the shape of horns and *ceapsă)* and that women in Jiu Valley (in villages like Uricani, Hobicen and Câmpul lui Neag) wore until 1880.[16]

The old women would cover their *pleteri* with white *tindeu* or *propoadă* ornamented at the two extremities (stripes made with black and red dyed cotton thread).

Women in the Jiu Valley used to wear the same type of shirt as those in the Land of Haţeg, only their shirts were made of a special streaked cloth, woven with black and red dyed thread and they also used different sewing techniques to decorate them.

Women would wear *catrinţe* and tasselled *oprege* over their laps, using the same type of tassels as the women in Banat.

The sewn up *şubă* of the women in the Jiu Valley was made of white frieze. It was ankle long, with four lateral gores and relatively tight turned up sleeves and it was ornamented with *bârnaş* made of woollen threads plaited at home: white and red for young women, dark blue and violet (*modur*) for old women. The sewn up waistcoat would be worn under the *şubă* (overcoat) and the latter would be fastened on with a woollen girdle woven in the technique of the four threads. The girdle could be red, violet or blue[17], according to the age of the woman who wore it and it was continued with long tassels at both ends.

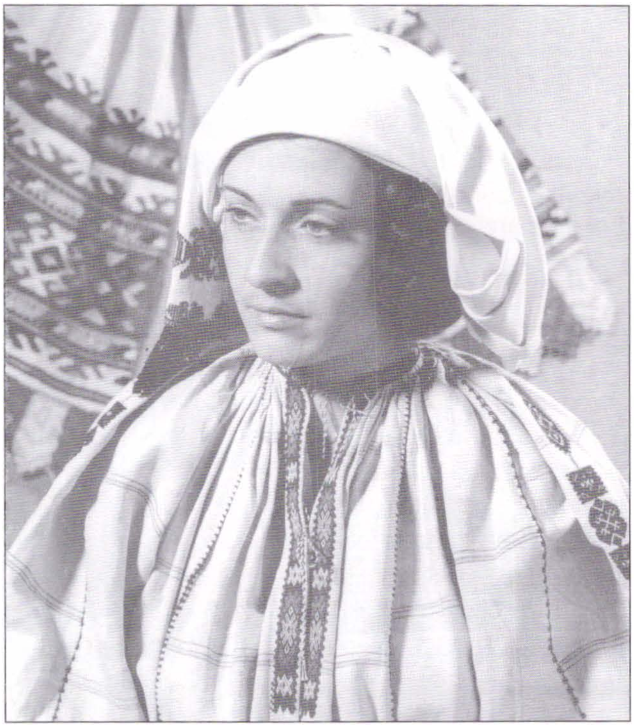
The folk costume of the Land of Olt, with its variants created in the zones Avrig, Făgăraş and Perşani had many similarities with the traditional clothing of the Jiu Valley and the Land of Haţeg.[18] The variants of costume were shaped according to the morphologic structure and compositional adjustments required by the geographical position of the villages in the zones mentioned above.

The costume of Avrig was influenced by the costume in Mărginimea Sibiului and also by the clothing in the zone of Făgăraş and the costume of Perşani had common traits with the one of the Târnave. We present below the folk costume in the Land of Făgăraş, where the cut of the female shirt was identical to the one practiced in the Land of Haţeg.

Nevertheless, the women in the Land of Făgăraş would wear different headdresses, the *căiţă with reţe* and the *pomeselnic* that the old women preserved as authentic costume elements up to 1940.

All women would respect the custom that required that a woman should be buried with her headdress. When the *căiţă* and the *pomeselnic* got out of daily use, they were preserved as ritual pieces in the wedding ceremonial. The godmother and the bride would wear this type of headdress, demonstrating that they are archaic pieces traditional for costume of the Land of Făgăraş.

Only specialized women knew how to make the *căiţă with reţe* that was composed of two elements: the front part (*fruntariu*) and the *căiţă* (bonnet). The material used to make the *fruntariu* would vary from one village to another: it could be white cotton fabric



Woman wearing a hairdo with ***pleteri*** *and a specific head cover* ***ştergar*** *(Jiu Valley)*

←
Traditional costumes from Haţeg

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[16] N. Dunăre. *Arta populară din Valea Jiului - Regiunea Hunedoara (The Folk Art of of the Jiu Valley - Hunedoara Region)*, p. 331.

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 372.

[18] Cornel Irimie. *Portul popular din Ţara Oltului. Zona Avrig (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Avrig Zone)*; *Portul popular din Ţara Oltului. Zona Perşanilor (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Perşani Zone)*; *Portul popular din Ţara Oltului. Zona Făgăraş (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Făgăraş Zone)*.

sewn with buds, cashmere with floral print, hair (wool), and satin, black velvet. Irrespective of the material, the *fruntariu* was decorated with rows of long black beads sometimes in alternation with small round beads. The margins of the *fruntariu* were provided with two laces.

The *căiţă* was made of white fabric on which the cashmere with floral motives would be applied. On the lateral sides of the head at the ear level the so-called *reţe* were fixed. The *reţe* were made of coiled up creased black cord and the coils were larger if the woman was richer. The *căiţă* was fixed under the chin with a wide ribbon sewn with coloured silk thread (red, green, white, yellow, violet). The two *reţe* were tied together by a black ribbon.

The *căiţă* and the *pomeselnic* were placed over the hair parted in two and braided in two plaits that were raised around the head. According to custom, the godmother should have given a *căiţă* to her goddaughter at the wedding feast.

The *pomeselnic* was a kind of kerchief of cotton cloth woven in the technique of the two threads and it had one end decorated with the so-called *ciurel* (a decoration composed of hand woven patterns) intercalated with woven rows of geometrical motives and rows motives sewn only with black and yellow dyed cotton thread. All around its margins, the *pomeselnic* would be ornamented with a white cord bought from the tradesmen and called *strâmbuleţ*. On the part of the *pomeselnic* that was placed above the forehead women would sew "on the inside" small motives with black and yellow dyed cotton thread.

The *pomeselnic* was decorated at both ends in other villages.

The *căiţă* with *pomeselnic* would be worn in church at weddings and on holidays. The *pomeselnic* would be arranged differently on the head, according to the local tradition and the age of the women who would wear it.

A special costume piece that the girls in the Land of Făgăraş used to wear was the black felt hat, with its calotte adorned with coloured tassels made of the ends of the warp threads.

The old type of female shirt with the sleeves tightened with *pumnaşi* and ornamented with *buds across the elbows* was later replaced by the shirt with *buds across the shoulders* and flounces.

The pieces that women wore over the laps were part of the typology of the costume with two *catrinţe*, the dimensions, decoration and chromatics of which varied in time and generated several ornamental variants in successive evolution stages of the folk costume.

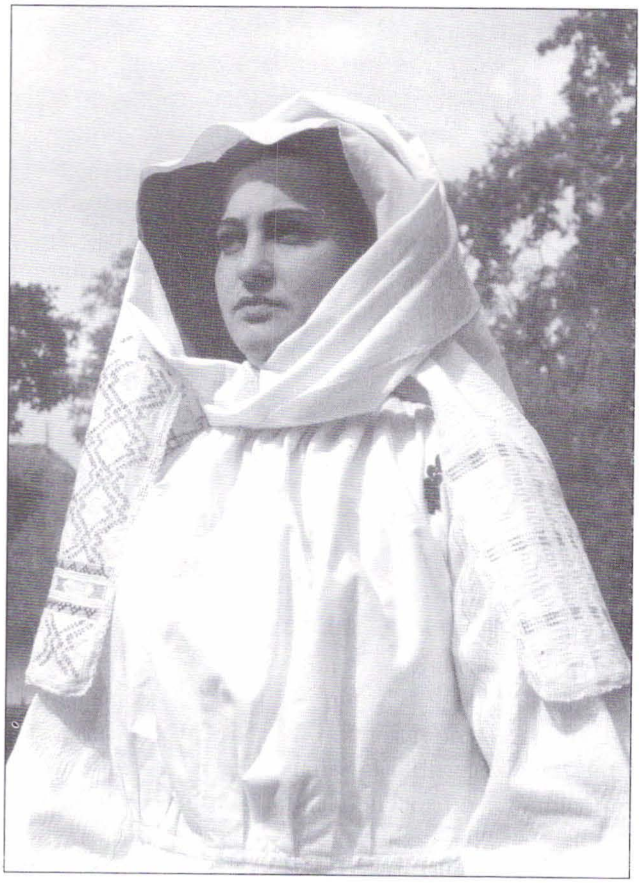
The Sălişte costume was adopted in the local clothing after 1900 due to its elegance, to the refinement of the decorative composition and its component pieces.

The local male costume included at first the old shirt made of woven cloth with black streaks sometimes in alternation with red streaks of dyed cotton thread. This old shirt had a straight cut, narrow collar and large sleeves hanging freely. Later it was replaced by the shirt with turned up collar and sleeves tightened in *pumnaşi* and with a decorative pattern that reflected the influence of town models.

Men would wear their shirts over the white frieze *cioareci* and fastened it on with wide *şerpare* ornamented with stapled motives and patterns sewn with straps of coloured leather.

The traditional winter coats in the costume of the Land of Făgăraş were the sewn up waistcoat, the *bubou* and the *recăl*. On very cold days, men would wear the *sarică*, a long sheepskin coat with the wool on the outside.

The Pădureni zone is bordered to the north by the Mureş Valley, to the west by Banat, to the south by the Land of Haţeg and to the east by the communities between the Hunedoara and Deva. This zone is made of 40 villages lying on hill ridges and isolated from the neighbouring areas by a girdle of woods. A most remarkable variant of the peasant civilization has flourished here, characterized by an im-pressive unity of style apparent in all its forms (house, interior, occupations and crafts, customs and mentality).



***Căiţă** with **pomeselnic** (Land of Făgăraş)*

The female costume of Pădureni is certainly monumental and has its own individuality as it preserves a lot of old authentic elements, beginning with the textile head covers: the *ceapsă* and the long kerchief. The *ceapsă* was a conic bonnet decorated with geometric patterns (especially lozenge) sewn with black wool and bordered with *ciptă* (white lace worked with the needle and requiring great skill). The white long kerchief fixed on the top of the *ceapsă* and hanging down over the shoulders conferred to the costume a special distinction.

The lasting piece of the female costume of Pădureni was the shirt pleated around the neck and ornamented on the collar, breast and sleeves with an exclusively geometric decoration. The most original are the compact rectangular sewn patterns called *table* (tables) that cover the whole outside part of the sleeves.

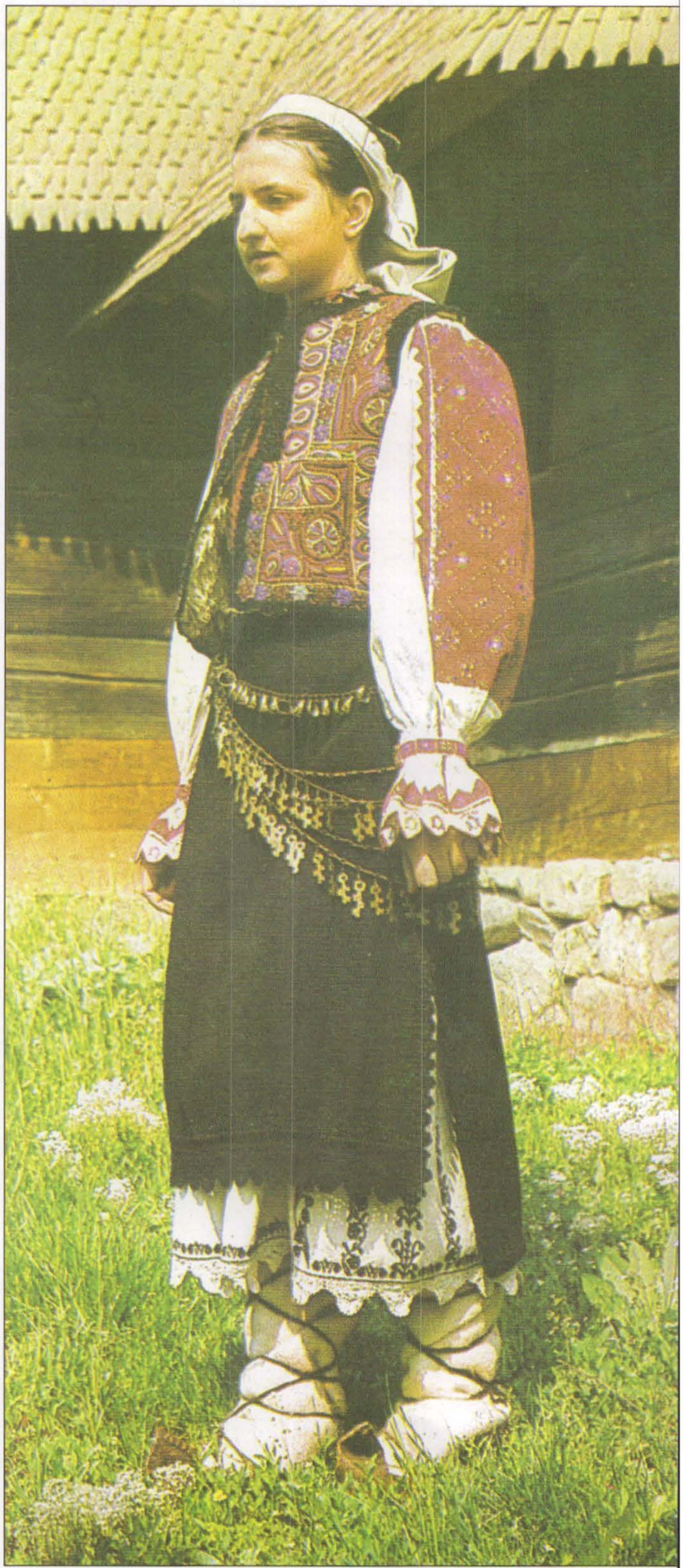
The decorative solution chosen by each woman was unique, conferring great artistic value to each shirt. Not even two pieces are alike, the variants resulting from the ever renewed arrangement of the ornamental motives that constitute the compositional architecture.

The wide *oprege* (*catrinţe*) worn in pairs were woven of black wool in the technique of the four threads and decorated only by hand inserted threads and bordering tassels or lace. Their sober decoration points out the rich and brightly coloured decoration of the shirts. The girls and young married women would mostly wear shirts with red sewn patterns.

The girdles are also executed with an ancient technique in the Pădureni area. The girdle *in sticks* (*brâu în bate*) was warped on a branch of tree by using little sticks. The *oprege* were fastened on with the long *brăcira*, by which the *balţi* were fixed. These *balţi* were a complex adornment made of a belt with narrow straps of leather on which small geometrical tin ornaments were scaled. Among these waist ornaments we also mention long chains with little brass keys and rings strung on a leather strand called *plotog*. Similar ornaments with ritual magic functions connected to fertility rites were discovered in the Dacian treasures.

A necessary piece of the female costume was the *cojoc* (partly open waistcoat) with the breast field adorned with patterns sewn with coloured wool thread. The *cojoc* had several ornamental variants determined by the shape of the space empty of ornament on the back of the waistcoat. This space could have the shape of half-moon (one or groups of four), butterfly or cross. The decoration of the waistcoat highly depended on the age, occasion and the native village of the woman who wore it.

The head covers of the men in Pădureni were the hat with high rims adorned with bands of beads (*latiţe*), ribbons and cock feathers on holidays and the fleecy black lamb cap.



Traditional costume of Pădurenii Hunedoarei: ***ceapsă****, shirt with* ***table****,* ***oprege****, waistcoat,* ***balţi****, leggings and* ***opinci***

The old shirt with straight cut and large sleeves hanging loose was gradually replaced by the shirt with sleeves tightened with cuffs (*pumnaşi*). The white sewn patterns that decorated the collar, the neck slide and the cuffs were later replaced by coloured sewn patterns. The important decorative element of the male shirt was the *key*, a sewn pattern worked with various techniques and used to unite the sheets of material.

Men would wear their shirts over the simple white frieze *cioareci* and fasten them on with tanned leather *chimire* adorned with stapled motives.

The inhabitants of Pădureni also would wear sewn up waistcoats and *laibere* – white frieze vests bordered with *bârnaş* differently coloured according to the age of the wearer.

A common piece of both male and female costume was the white frieze *şubă*, discreetly ornamented with coloured *bârnaş*, the red ornamental cords being preferred by the young people.

The traditional old costume of Mărginimea Sibiului was impressive especially because of the headdress of women. This was composed of a *vălitoare* that looked like a helmet and is documentary attested since the 17th century. The piece of cloth was 3 metres long and goffered, then twisted and creased in the part that would cover the head according to an ancient technique ("in the fingers") that only specialized old women would know. The rest of the cloth ("the tail") was ornamented with sewn patterns and fringes and it fell loose down the back. The *vălitoare* would be covered with *ciurel*, a square thin tulle fabric embroidered in the corners with coloured silk or soft wool threads. The skilful pleats of *vălitoare* could be noticed under the *ciurel*.

The *vălitoare with ciurel* was the distinct headdress of the married women. During the wedding, after the *treat* (the announcement of gifts), the bride's head was covered for the first time with this special headdress.

In the summer, the women of all ages in the Sibiu area would wear straw (wheat or rye) hats over their kerchiefs with floral patterns and tassels. The women are represented artistically with their picturesque *comănace* in the paintings of Carol Popp of Szathmary.

In the past, the women in the Sibiu area would wear a type of shirt that today is preserved only by the dowry chests of the old women or by collective memory. This shirt with red streaks was made of house woven cloth and pleated around the neck under a narrow collar band called locally *beată* and rarer *obinzeală*. It had *ciupag* under the collar (the pleats were made with three-five threads) and long and large sleeves ended with *pumnaşi* (cuffs) or with *turned up pumnaşi*. The sleeves were decorated with patterns sewn with yellow thread to unite the pieces of material and horizontal sewn rows (*altiţă* or *umeraş*) combined with two long rows and three short rows that were sewn down the sleeves with soft wool or black silk thread using very small and refined sewing points.

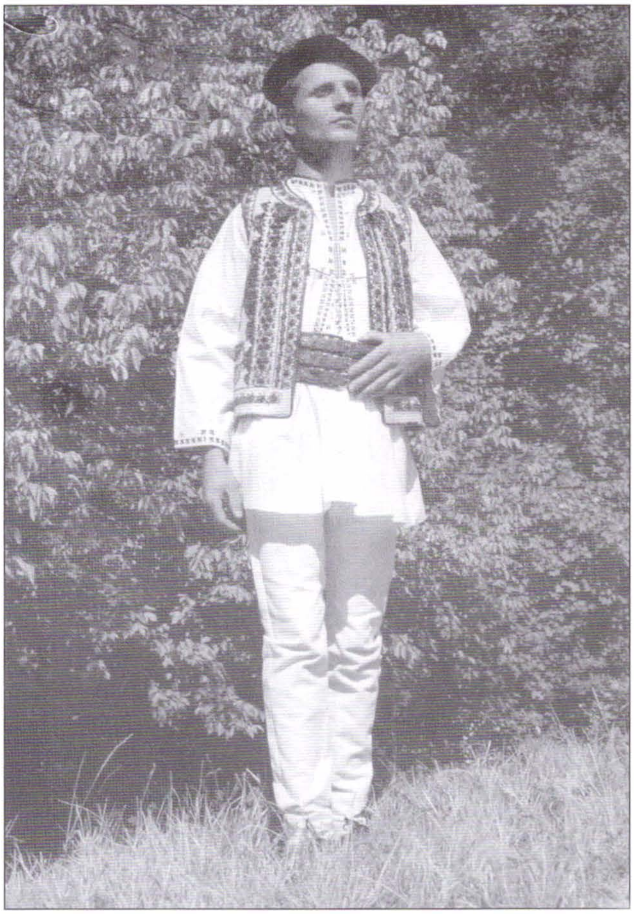
The dark blue or red *catrinţă* – decorated with simple horizontal streaks alternating with patterned streaks – was worn over the back white laps while the front laps were covered by the black apron made of two sheets and discreetly ornamented in the lower part with woven or sewn patterns.

The newer costume adopted by the women in Săliştea Sibiului was quickly adopted by women beyond the area Mărginimea Sibiului and became very popular.

The costume "of Sălişte" is part of the typology with paired *catrinţe*. The shirt has large sleeves ended with flounces and amply decorated with the same horizontal sewn patterns that ornamented the older shirts (*altiţă* or *umeraş*). The three or five vertical rows of sleeve ornamentation were called *little hammers* (*ciocănele*) and they were framed by other sewn vertical rows called *podigheală* or *chindiseală* that went down across the flounces up to the ends of the sleeves and they were sown with yellow metallic thread, dyed cotton or silk thread. The same ornamental rows would also decorate the breast of the shirt. Another sewn row of motives ornamented the *lânceţul* - the band that attached the flounce to the sleeve. The flounce ended with a sewn row of motives and with lace.

The paired *catrinţe* (so-called *şurţe*) were adopted in the traditional costume in 1900. Women would wear them over the creased skirt of thin white fabric. The black *şurţe* were initially made of house woven hair in the technique of the four threads and then women started to make them of fine bought cloth. They were decorated by woven streaks placed horizontally on the whole surface of material and on the lower part they were ornamented with a woven streak or two or three rows sewn with wool, silk, yellow and silver thread. Other *şurţe* would be ornamented only on the lower part. The front *şurţ* was larger than the back one and it was side bordered with lace and ended with tassels. The back *şurţ* was festooned on the margins and decorated with lace and it had no tassels. These *şurţe* were fastened on with three-coloured *bete* (girdles).

The costume of Sălişte was very distinguished and refined due to the contrasting white and black effect of the black embroideries over the white background of the shirt or of the black *catrinţe* sewn with golden and silk threads over the simple white laps and that is how we explain the prestige of this type of costume that lead to the fact that it replaced the local costume in many zones of Romania.



Traditional costume from Mărginimea Sibiului: shepherd's hat, shirt with ***barburi****, thin cloth trousers,* ***chimir*** *and waistcoat*

The festive shirt with *barburi* was very large (it had 6 to 10 gores on each lateral side) and the refined embroideries and its amplitude made it very elegant. It was also a ceremonial shirt, as the bridegroom and the godfather would wear it at the wedding.

The common costume pieces for both the men and women of Mărginimea Sibiului were the festive sewn up and partly open waistcoats embroidered with silk and dyed cotton threads and with the year of crafting, initials or name of the owner on the pockets and also the waist short sheepskin coats with very valuable embroideries sewn with soft wool, dyed cotton or silk thread and metallic thread.

The sheepskin coats trimmed with otter fur were obligatory in the wedding costume of the bridegroom as was the *sarică* of white fleecy wool (thickened in the dammed whirlpool) with a straight cut and long sleeves.

A third type of costume spread in the north-west of Romania (the areas Oaş, Bihor and Arad) is part of the typology of women's costume with a *zadie* or apron in the front over the white laps that form a skirt and of the type of male costume composed of short shirt and large trousers (*gaci*).

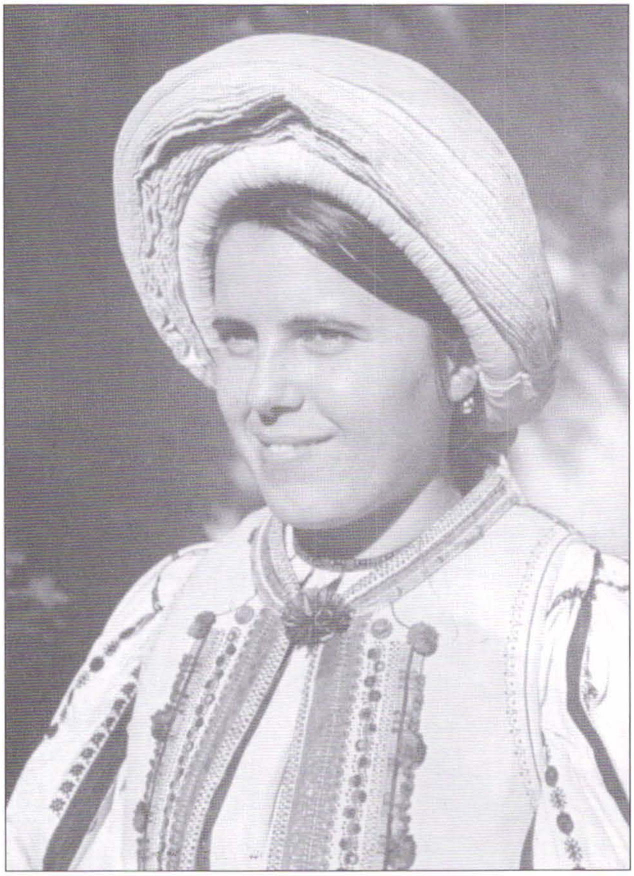
As the Romanians in Transylvania have long co-existed with German and Hungarian population they adopted some foreign elements of cut and composition of the costume, losing thus some characteristic autochthonous features of the traditional clothing system and reflecting the foreign cultural influences.

The dominant aesthetic feature of the female costume in Oaş is *the tail*, a specific festive hairdo of brides and girls (on certain occasions). Only some old women in the villages in the area could make such a hairdo by braiding the hair according to an extremely complicated and time-consuming technique (it took six to eight hours)

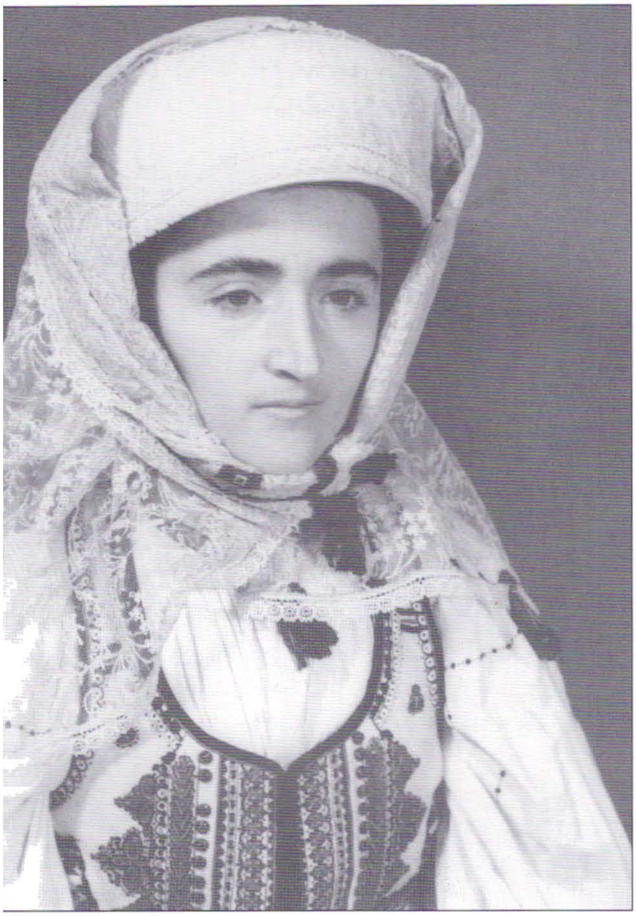
The specialist would part the girl's hair in the middle and split it into thin twisted strands that were combined into a very tight net. This hairdo would go down from the temples to the nape of the neck and end with a plait that hang down the back and ended with coloured wool tassels.

The old shirt with *umere* (*shoulders*) was replaced by the shirt with an *inset* (*cheptar*), characterized by a big rectangular inset placed below the collar and richly ornamented with sewn patterns and by sleeves ended with flounces.

The girdle that fastened on the laps (known locally as *pogmată* or *guler – collar*) was ornamented with the



Head-covered woman from Mărginimea Sibiului



Vălitoare with **ciurel** (Mărginimea Sibiului)

same patterns in the same range of colours as the decoration on the inset.

The white cloth apron ornamented by hand woven patterns on its all surface or only on the lowest third would cover the laps of the female shirt in the front.

The common costume pieces for both men and women in the Land of Oaş were the short, white or grey *sumane* and the fleecy *gube*.

Passing on to the costume in Bihor district, we should remark that Beiuş was the most conservative area. The traditional costume has been preserved up to our days in this area in settlements like Crişţior, Sălişte, Pietroasa, Gurani, Budureasca, Roşia etc.

The archaic hairdo with *corni* - two braided plaits wrapped each around one *conci* - is characteristic for the area of the hairdo *with horns*.

As head cover, the old kerchief (*felegă*) with geometrically woven ornamented ends was replaced by the industrial head kerchief over which the big woollen *chişchineu* was placed. Women would take off their *felegă* when they entered the church and they put it on again when they came out.[19]

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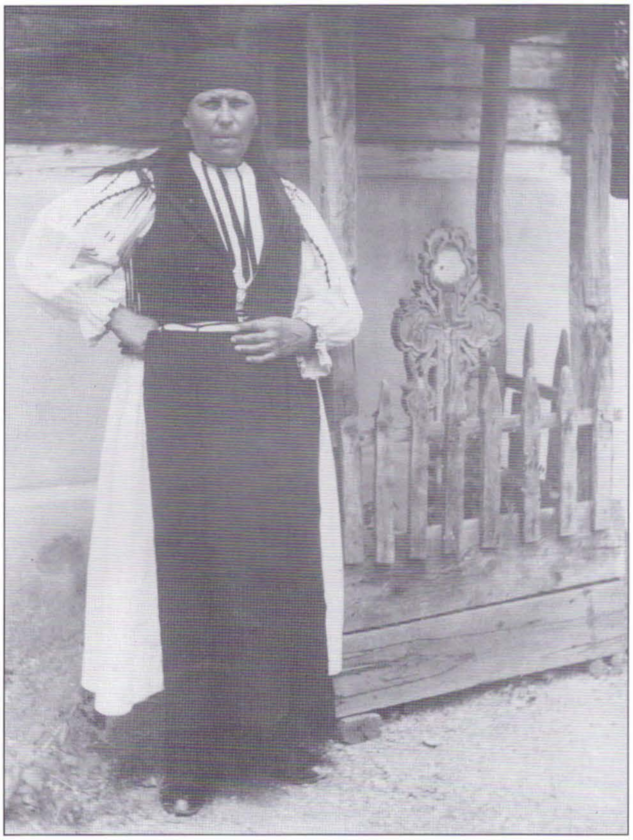
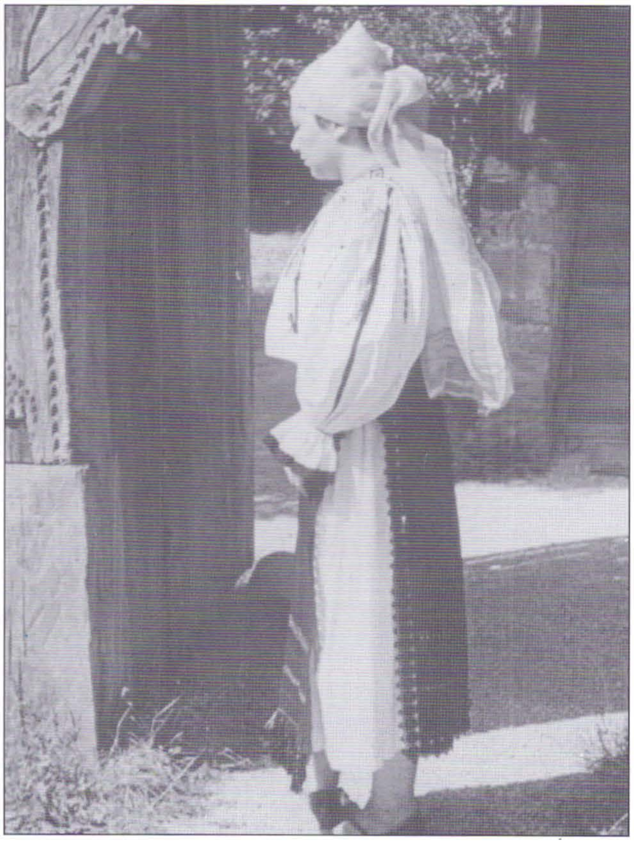
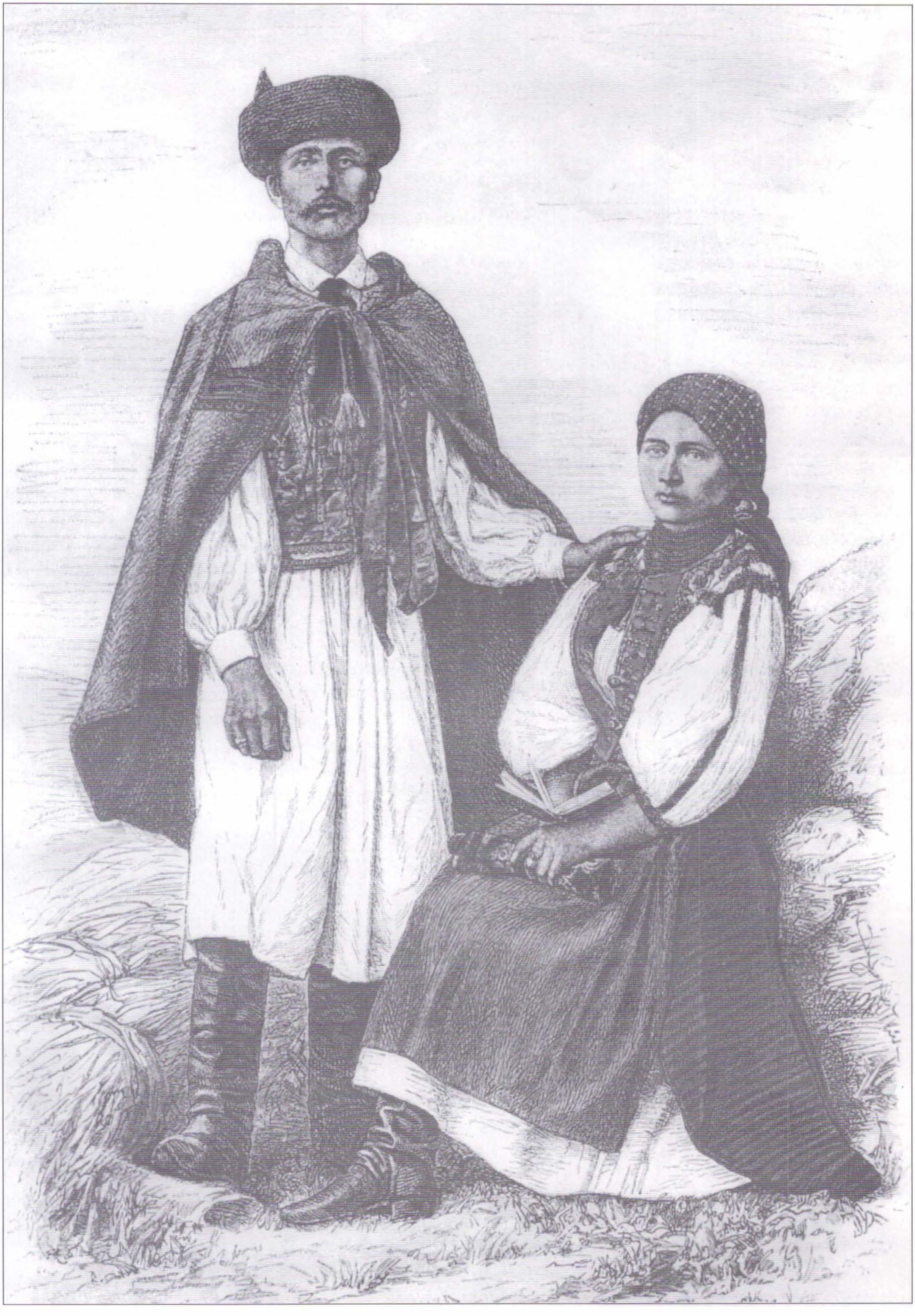
[19] Tereza Mózes, *Portul popular din nord-vestul României. Ţara Crişurilor* (*The Folk Costume in the North-West of Romania. The Land of the Criş*), p. 125.

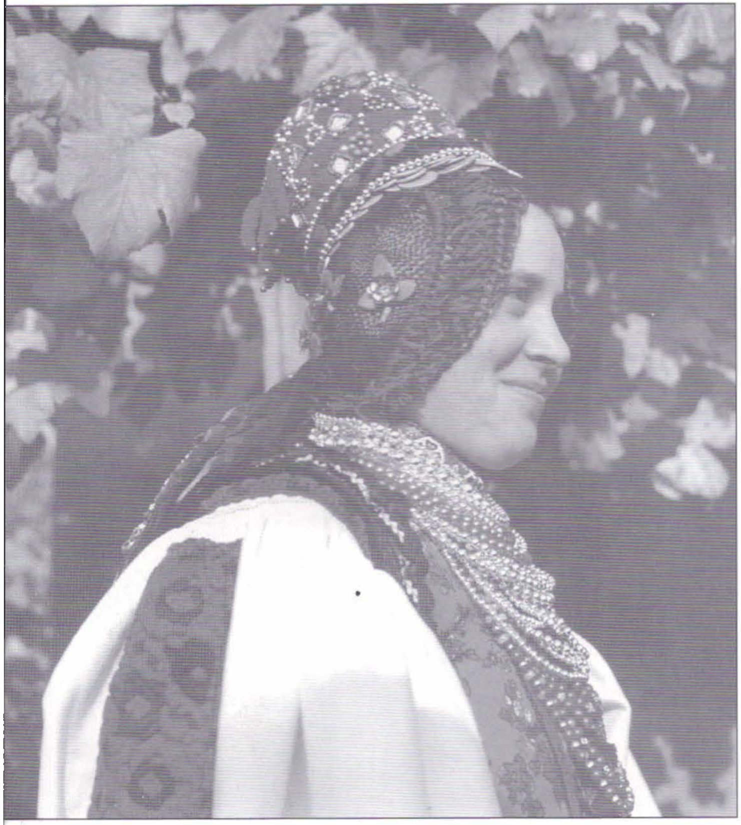
Traditional clothing from Sibiu ↓↘

Archaic costumes from the Sebeş Valley →
(drawing by A. Duvivier)









Bride from Oaş with her specific hairdo

The female shirt, called *spăcel* or *spătoi*, with the laps sewn to the *stani* and the *stani* and the sleeves pleated around the neck was characterized by two archaic sewing techniques: *on the rims of the pleats* (a technique called *scăfătură* locally) and *warped on the thread* (locally: *trăsură* or *trăsureşte*).[20] In time, this type of shirt was replaced by the shirt with separate laps and the sleeves attached on the shoulder lines.

The old costume had as lap cover the front *zadie* called *zapreg*, woven of wool and decorated with woven motives common to the plastic vocabulary all over Romania: *the hook*, *the communion bread* and *the ram's horns* were the most frequent. Then the woollen *zadie* was replaced by the hemp one and later by one made of cotton and a *zadie* made of industrial fabric with a decorative composition made of woven geometrical patterns placed on the lower third of the piece.

The traditional costume of Bihor has as obligatory festive element the kerchief with rich woven ornaments, which is worn over the arm or at the hip.

The specific head covers for the men in Bihor were the hair hat, the wheat or oat straw rimless hat (*clop*) that young men would adorn with bead bands, studs and pheasant, peacock or jay feathers and the fur cap that the young men would wear with flattened top and the old men would wear with the pointed top slanted to one side.

Along its evolution, the male shirt has had several morphologic and decorative variants: "the Romanian shirt", hip-short, with straight cut and collarless, having only a neck hem and hemp laces or yellow wire clasps, sleeves with loose ends and ornamental seams sewn with red cotton for young men, grey for men and black for old men; "the old man's shirt" with straight cut, narrow collar and the sleeves tightened in cuffs (*pumnari*) sewn in the technique "warped on the thread" with red, grey or black threads; and the recent type of shirt with high collar and the sleeves pleated at the shoulders, sewn *speteze*, decorated large cuffs and a breast ornamentation called *chingă* (a decorated band called *bridge – punte* or *strap – chingă*) would be applied over the pleats at the neck of the shirt.

The representative pieces of the folk costume in Bihor were the fur and frieze coats common to both male and female costumes.

As there were villages where a lot of furriers and tailors would learn to make these winter coats, a local

Traditional costumes from Bihor →

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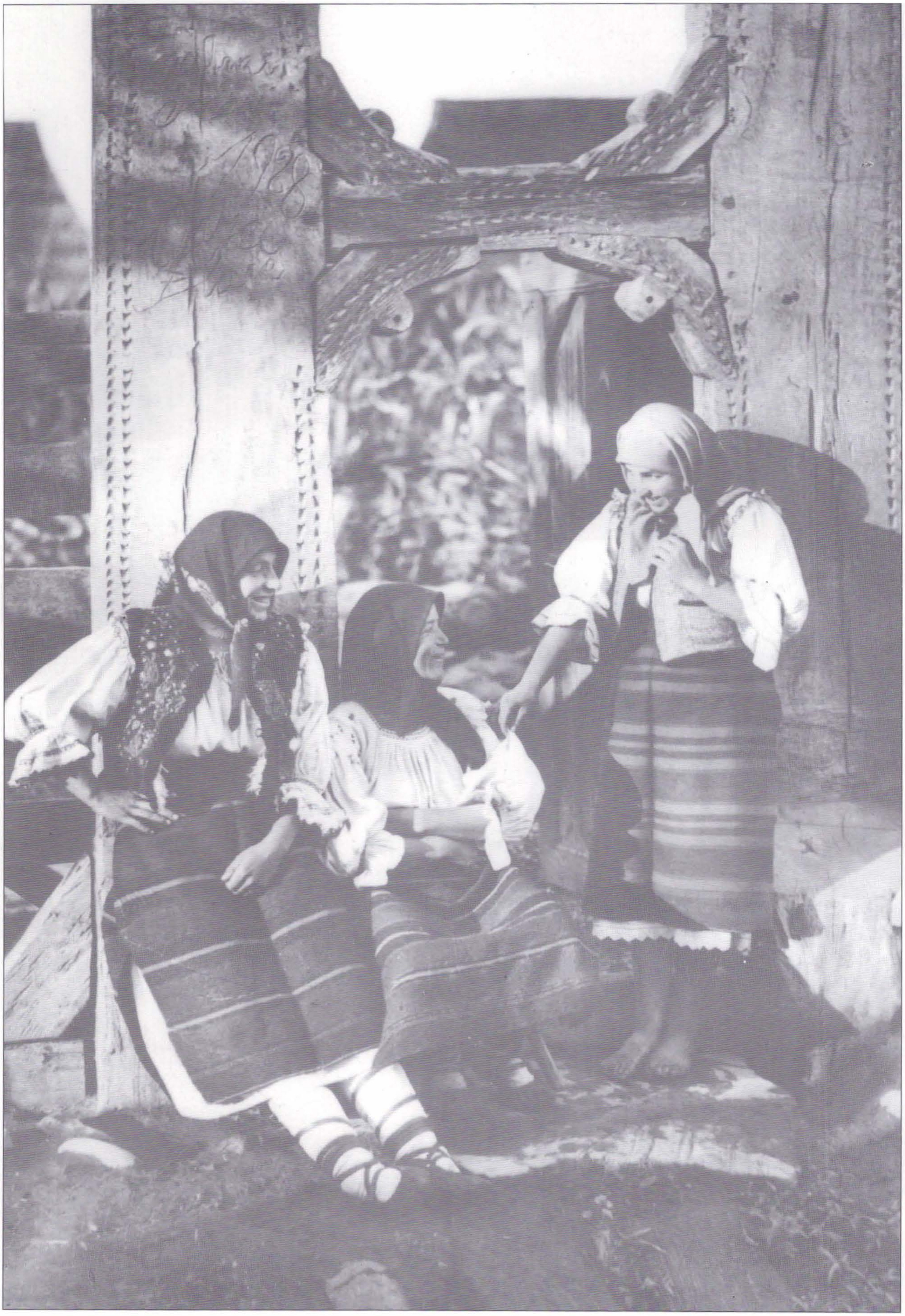
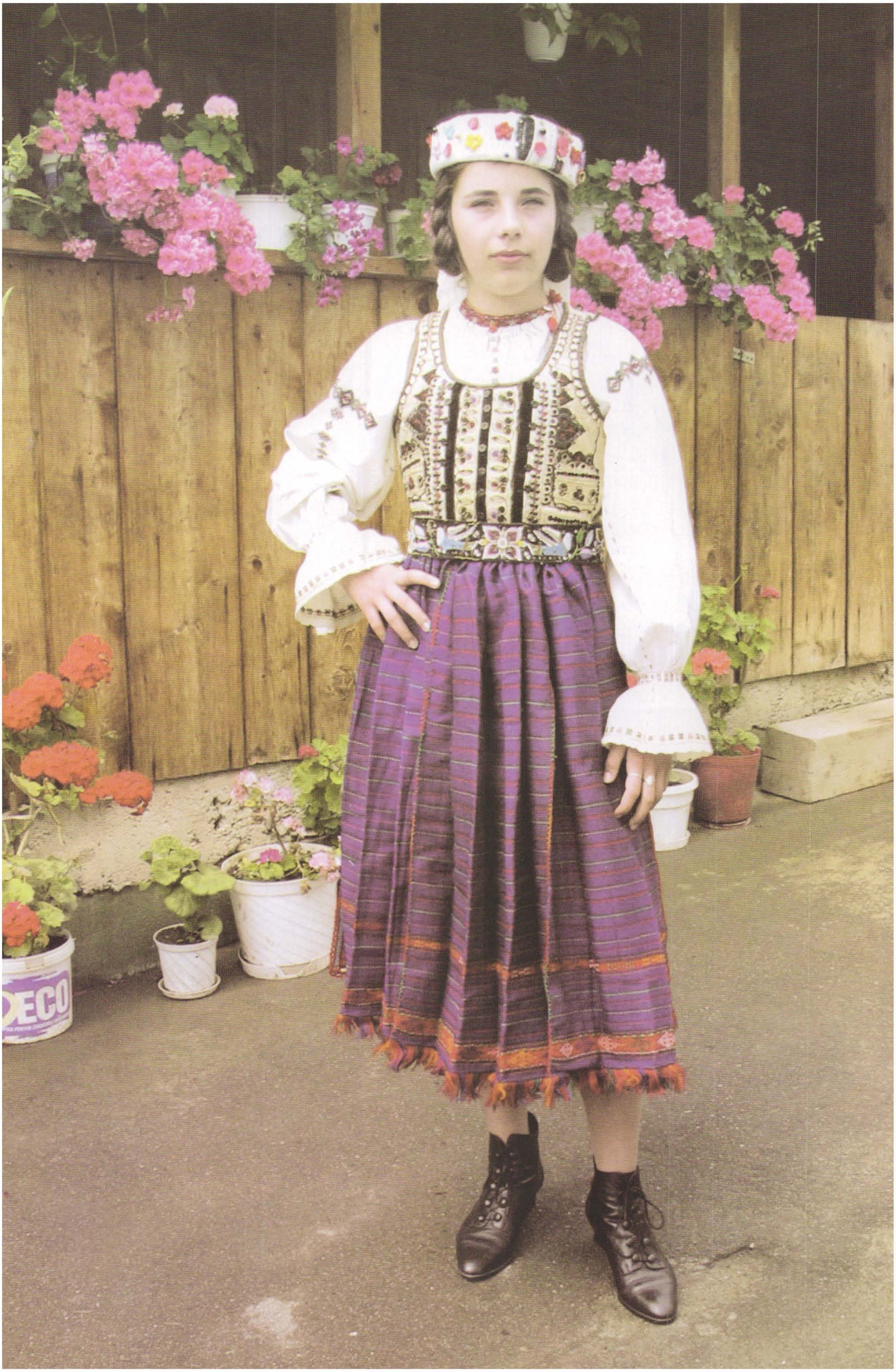
[20] Tereza Mózes, *Portul popular din nord-vestul României. Ţara Crişurilor (The Folk Costume in the North-West of Romania. The Land of the Criş)*, p. 17.



Women from Maramureş talking at the gate ↑

Costume with apron (Şona – Braşov) →


DECO

tradition was settled and conferred plastic expressiveness and elegance to the pieces in Bihor.

Four types of waistcoats circulated in the area: *poieneresc*, worked in Poienii de Jos, *binşenesc*, made by the craftsmen in Beiuş, *cohănesc*, worked by the craftsmen in Vaşcău and *unguresc*, worked at Finiş and Tărcaia.[21] All these types of waistcoats were ornamented by leather sewing and applications and by prominent embroidery made with *bârcă*.

The most aesthetic and appreciated were the *binşeneşti waistcoats*, characterized by the woollen balls (*ciupi*) and the black lamb fur trimming that bordered the pieces and the *cohăneşti waistcoats* decorated with embroidered polychrome vegetal motives.

The *sumane* worked by the specialized craftsmen in Sârbeşti were renowned in the whole area due to their white frieze background decorated with coloured cloth applications that reflected the personality of the craftsmen.

When they would go to regional fairs, the inhabitants of a certain area could be recognized by looking at their *sumane* and paying attention to the colours, techniques and position of ornaments and also to the materials used for decoration (cloth, passement and soft wool thread).

The Arad costume is part of the same typology as the costume in Oaş and Bihor. Women would wear laps fastened on to the waist by *pomnată* and covered by a front pleated apron and men would put on short shirts hanging over their trousers.

The support of the female hairdo would be the triangular wire (*drot*) *conci* covered with red *ceapsă* and then with a *cot* (white kerchief) that was later replaced by an industrial kerchief with floral print.

The female shirt - that has continued the tradition of the Dacian shirt - has still its pleats around the neck and a straight cut and pleated sleeves attached to the shoulder lines. The specific feature of the shirt is the streaked material with white woven streaks called *vrâste de cinari* that is used only for the sleeves, which are further decorated with the *table pattern* (named locally *row on the sleeve - şir pe mânecă*) from the shoulders to the cuffs. Other ornamental fields were on the collar and sometimes on the cuffs and they were sewn with black and red dyed cotton. The seam (*cheea*) had an important decorative role besides its practical function of uniting the pieces of material.

The apron (named *cârpă - cloth* locally) was worn only over the front laps. It was woven of two or three widths of cotton cloth and decorated with polychrome geometrical woven patterns placed on the lower third of the piece. A further decoration was the lace of alternating colours that bordered the apron.

Men in the Arad area would wear short shirts richly ornamented on the collar, shoulders and cuffs over the white frieze *cioareci* decorated with applications of cords and coloured cloth or over the large thin cloth trousers in the summer.

As in Bihor, the winter coats of Arad constituted emblems of the costume in this area. The waistcoats and the sheepskin coats were richly adorned with motives sewn with wool and silk thread and with artificial leather applications.

The white frieze *şube* (coats) have also had a great range of ornaments made of cords and coloured cloth applications that composed different patterns from one village to another.

The female costume in the Bran area, belonging to the typology of the costume with *fotă*, creates a distinct note in the system of the Transylvanian folk costume.

The individuality of the Bran costume is a result of the intense cultural exchanges that this area has had in time with Wallachia, the Land of Bârsa and the Braşov area.

The quite original shirt with twisted sleeves was part of the Bran festive traditional costume in the 19th century adopted also in other areas (Muscel, Covasna, Făgăraş and the Land of Vrancea).

It is very likely that this type of shirt was spread on a much larger area in the past (as in the case of the shirt with *ciupag*) if we keep in mind the fact that the folk costume had unitary structure on large areas of the Romanian territory in the past.

On the other hand, the different economic, technical and cultural development rhythm of the ethnographic zones where this type of shirt existed made its mark on the evolution of the costume and the shirt with twisted sleeves got out of use in some areas faster than in other areas.

According to some hypotheses, this type of shirt is of ancient origin, but other experts believe that the cutting system specific to the shirt with twisted sleeves was first used at the noble women's costumes in the Romanian provinces and then it was adopted by the peasants.

Recent researches[22] argue substantially that this type of shirt is an original autochthonous creation and a variant of the Dacian blouse that was adopted by the courtiers in the medieval period.

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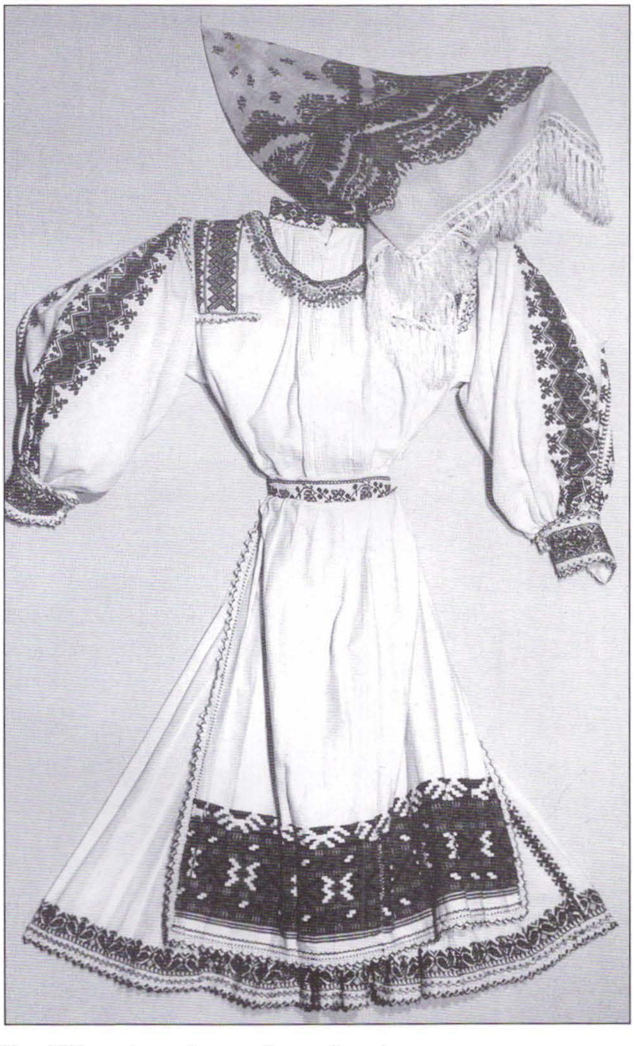
[21] Ioan Godea, *Zona etnografică Beiuş* (*The Ethnographic Zone of Beiuş*), pp. 79-80.

[22] Ion Cherciu, *Arta populară din Ţara Vrancei* (*The Folk Art of the Land of Vrancea*), pp. 152-153.

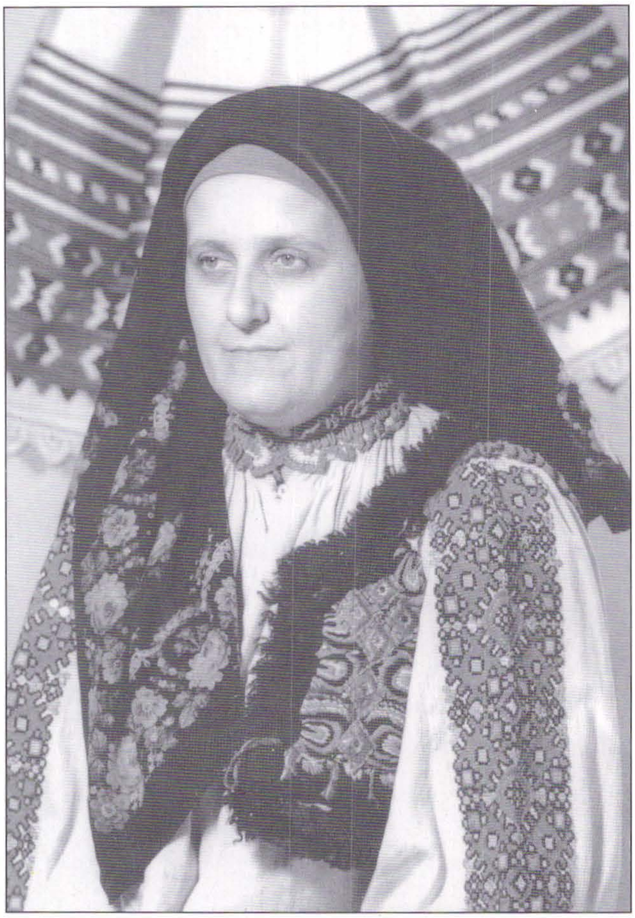
This type of shirts had triangular sleeves with the sharp angle towards the wrists. The spiraled shape of the sleeve would be obtained by sewing the long right side and the oblique side of the triangle according to a special technique. As it was very large, the sleeve was pleated around the arm.

The old authentic *fotă* of the Bran costume had two variants: the pleated one, which was decorated with coloured streaks against red background and the overlapping *fotă* (with *pulpene*), which was only pleated at the back, had a black or dark blue background and red or orange overlapping ends streaked or decorated with woven motives made with polychrome wool associated to metallic thread. Both types of *fotă* would be decorated at the waist and on the laps with groups of transversal streaks.

The Bran women's inventiveness stood out in the ornamental manner of the overlapping ends of the *fotă*: one of them was streaked and the other was decorated with woven patterns and women could wear their *fote* by overlapping alternatively one side over the other, depending on the occasion.



Traditional costume from Arad



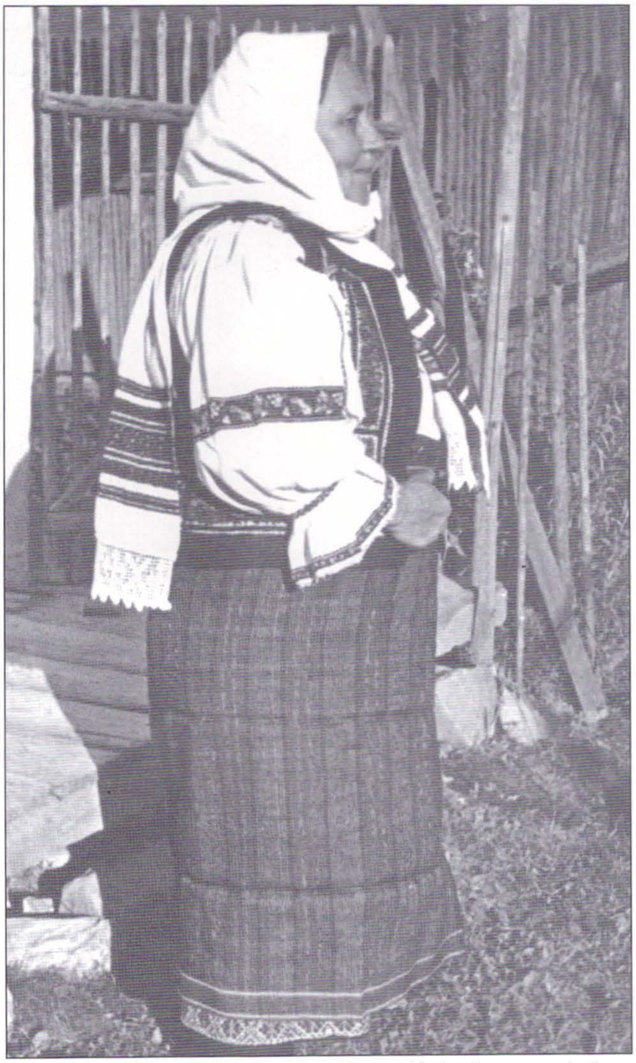
Headdress (Arad)

As the Bran and Muscel areas had close connections, the Bran female costume adopted elements characteristic to the Muscel one: the raw silk head kerchief, some ornamental motives and the tight *fotă*.

The specific male folk costume of Bran includes a straight shirt with large loose sleeves, ample due to its lateral gores and decorated with yellow or orange streaks of Muscel influence along the seams (in the same manner as female shirts), with ornamental motives placed around the collar, along the neck slide, on the laps and at the ends of the sleeves. Men would wear their shirts over woollen *cioareci* or *iţari* and fasten it on with the red girdle or a woollen *şerpar* (belt).

The elegant and imposing male costume of Bran is completed by the winter coats made of cloth or leather, which have many variants, some of them specialized for certain occupations (for example, the *sarică*, an ankle long coat made of sheepskin or fleecy cloth).

The folk costume with tight *fotă* is also characteristic for the upper Mureş Valley. If we represent the costume areas we cannot but be surprised at the presence of this type of costume among the Romanian population in the north of the Harghita district, irradiating to the zone of the villages Izvorul Mureşului, Voşlobeni,

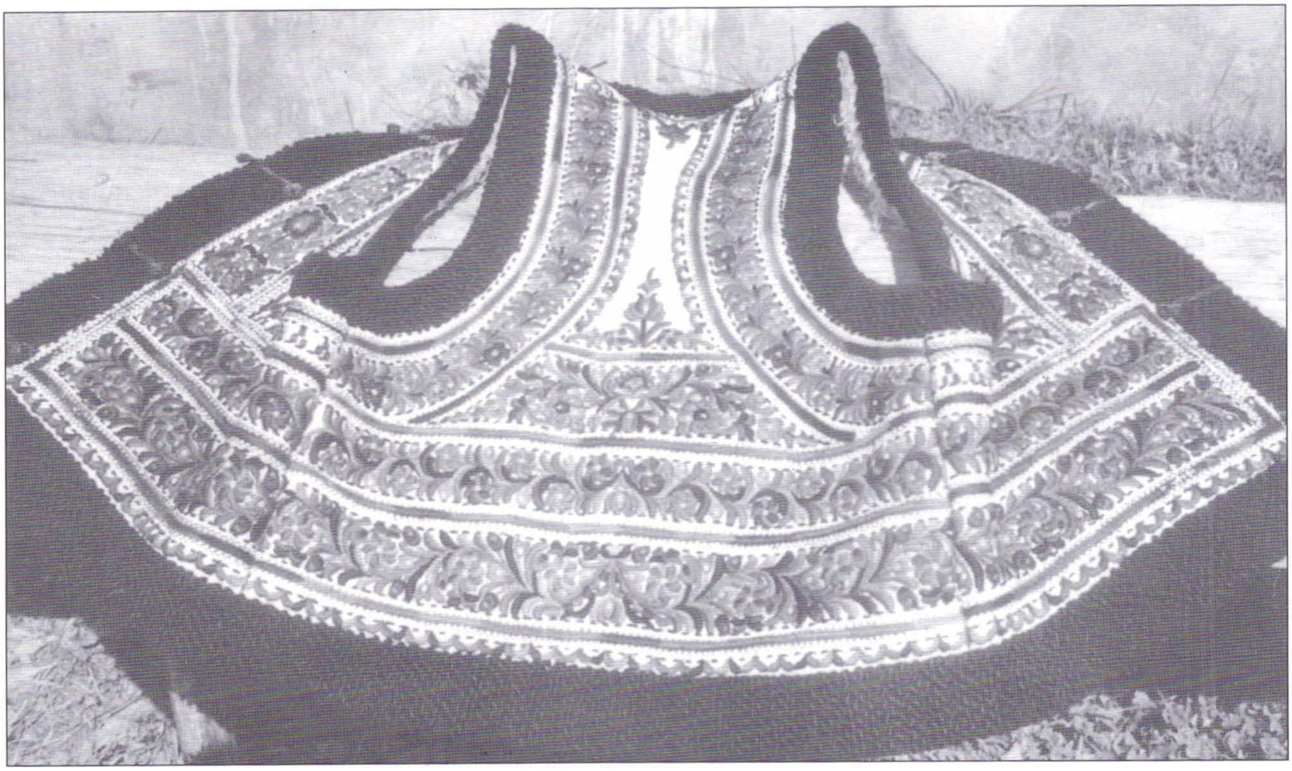


Traditional costume and **bondiţă** from Tulgheş

Sărmaş, Subcetate, Gălăuţaş, Topliţa or to the direction Mihăileni-Livezi, Frumoasa-Făgeţel and including the villages Lunca de Sus and Lunca de Jos (with Csango inhabitants) and the villages Bilbor, Corbu, Tulgheş towards the Bistricioara Valley.

When analyzing the genesis and evolution of the folk costume in this ethnographic enclave we should also take into account the inter-zonal contacts between the Romanians that lead to the taking over of some costume elements that were further adapted to the autochthonous type of costume.

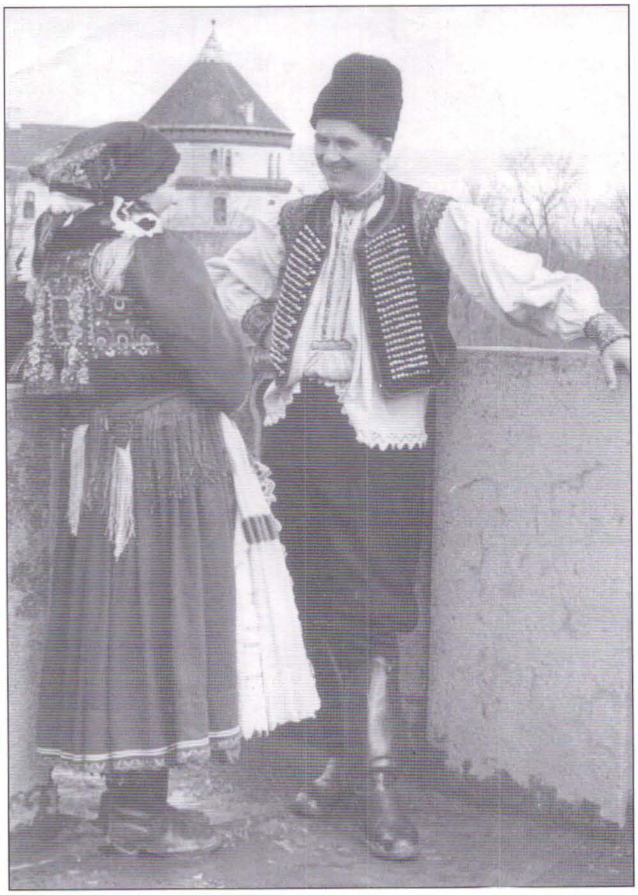
As the villagers in the Harghita district had permanent contacts to the Moldavians in the neighbouring districts (Suceava, Neamţ, Bacău), they gradually gave up their original Transylvanian costume and adopted the Moldavian costume. At first, the women in this area would wear shirts with the *stani* and the sleeves pleated around the neck, with a collar band and a slide in the front (for old women) or lateral (for young women), with sleeves decorated with *row across the elbow* and ended with flounces and they would wear paired *catrinţe* at the front and at the back. Men would wear straight shirts with collar band, slide in the front, large sleeves ended with cuffs (*pumnişori*) and lateral gores, fastened on with *şerpar* or *chimir* (belts) and associated with tight white frieze *cioareci* in the winter and with hemp, linen or cotton trousers in the summer. In time, these specific Transylvanian costumes were influenced by the Moldavian type.



The example above illustrates a phenomenon of exchange of cultural goods between two communities that belong to the same ethnic group and for whom the mountains have never been an obstacle against their desire to communicate.

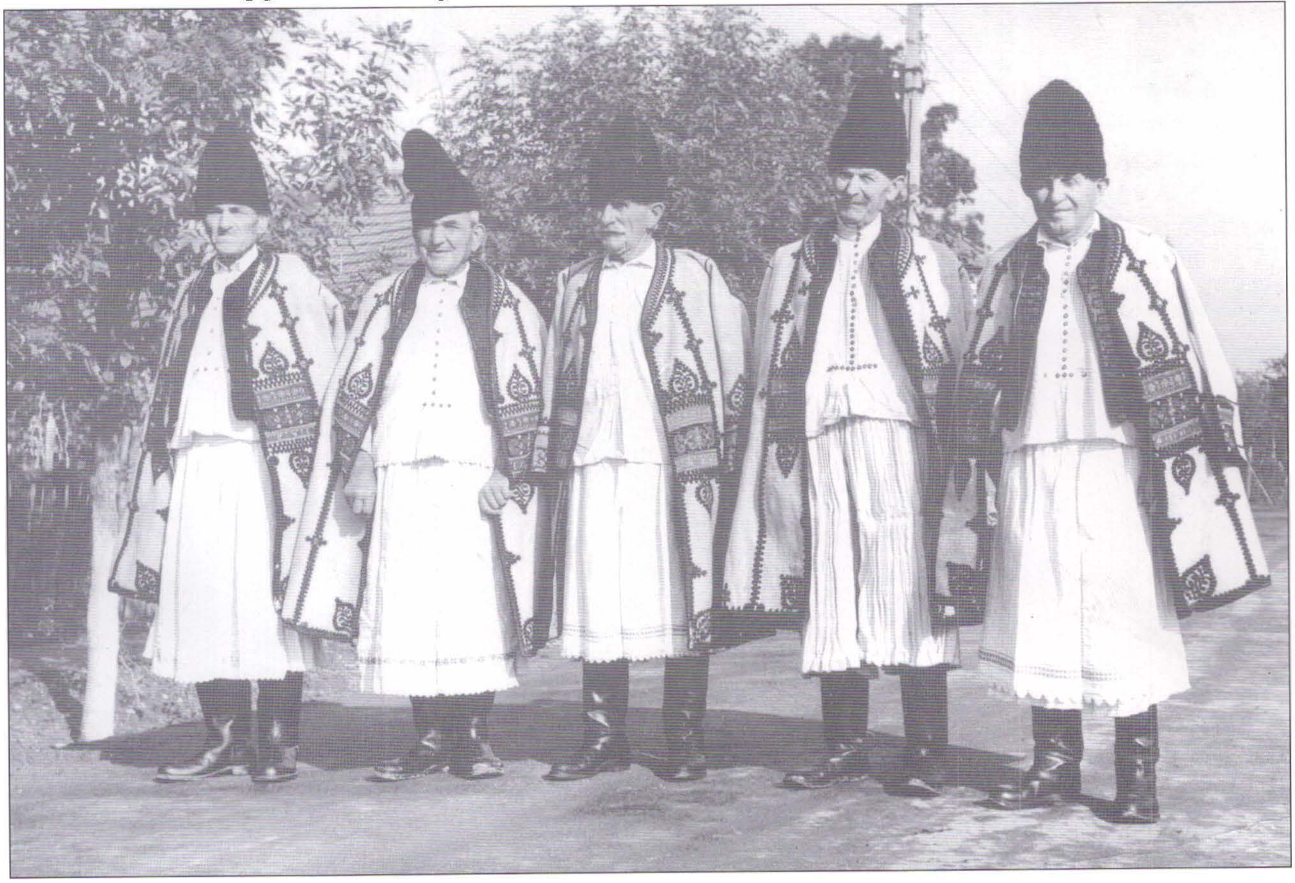
Nevertheless, this interpenetration phenomenon does not manifest itself equally all over the Harghita district, which contains several micro-zones with their own particularities. The Moldavian element is more powerful in the north of the district, in the mountain villages Bilbor, Corbu and Tulgheş - where the villagers completely took over the Moldavian costume - and not so visible as we go down to the centre of the district - where the local costume is a combination of traditional and borrowed pieces (the Transylvanian shirt and the Moldavian tight *fotă*, for example).

As a consequence, two main types of female costume are most frequent in the Harghita district: the Moldavian type, made of a shirt pleated around the neck and ornamented by using three distinct ranges (the *altiţă* on the shoulder, the pleating or *increţeală* under the *altiţă* and the *rows* on the sleeve) and of a *fotă*; and the mixed costume that associates the Transylvanian local shirt to the Moldavian *fotă*.



Young people wearing specific costumes from Ineu (Arad district)

Traditional clothing from the village Mocirla (Arad district)



It should be mentioned that the Moldavian shirt has not been adopted without any change. The women of Harghita adapted an element of cut and one of decoration to the Moldavian type by preserving the sleeve flounces and the pleated band (*lâncet*) below the collar and on the bracelet that separates the sleeve from the flounce.

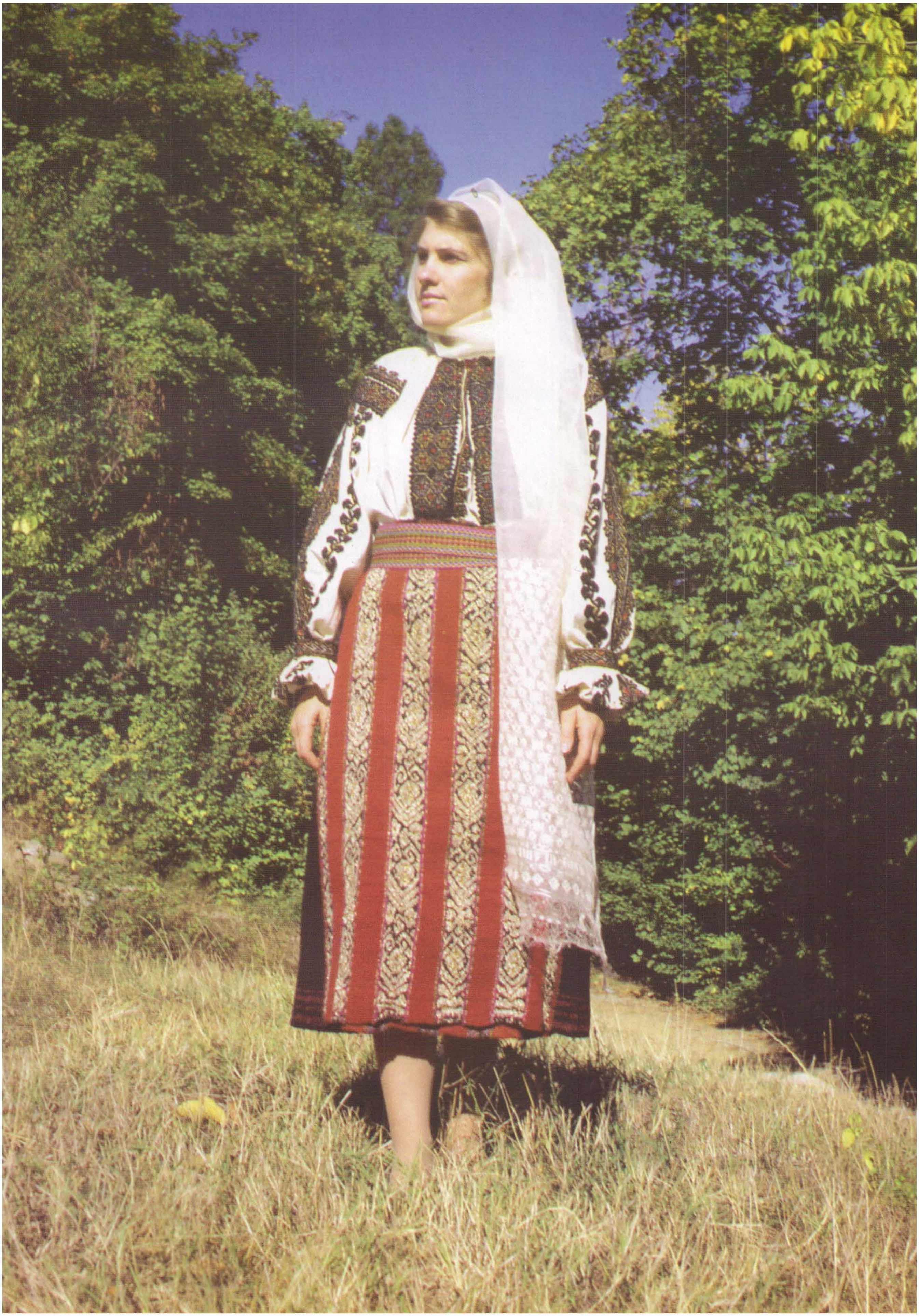
At the same time, the Moldavian costume elements have been adopted in Harghita with their Moldavian names. The *fotă* is called *catrinţă* or *prigitoare* both in Harghita and in the neighbouring Moldavian districts Suceava, Neamţ and Bacău.

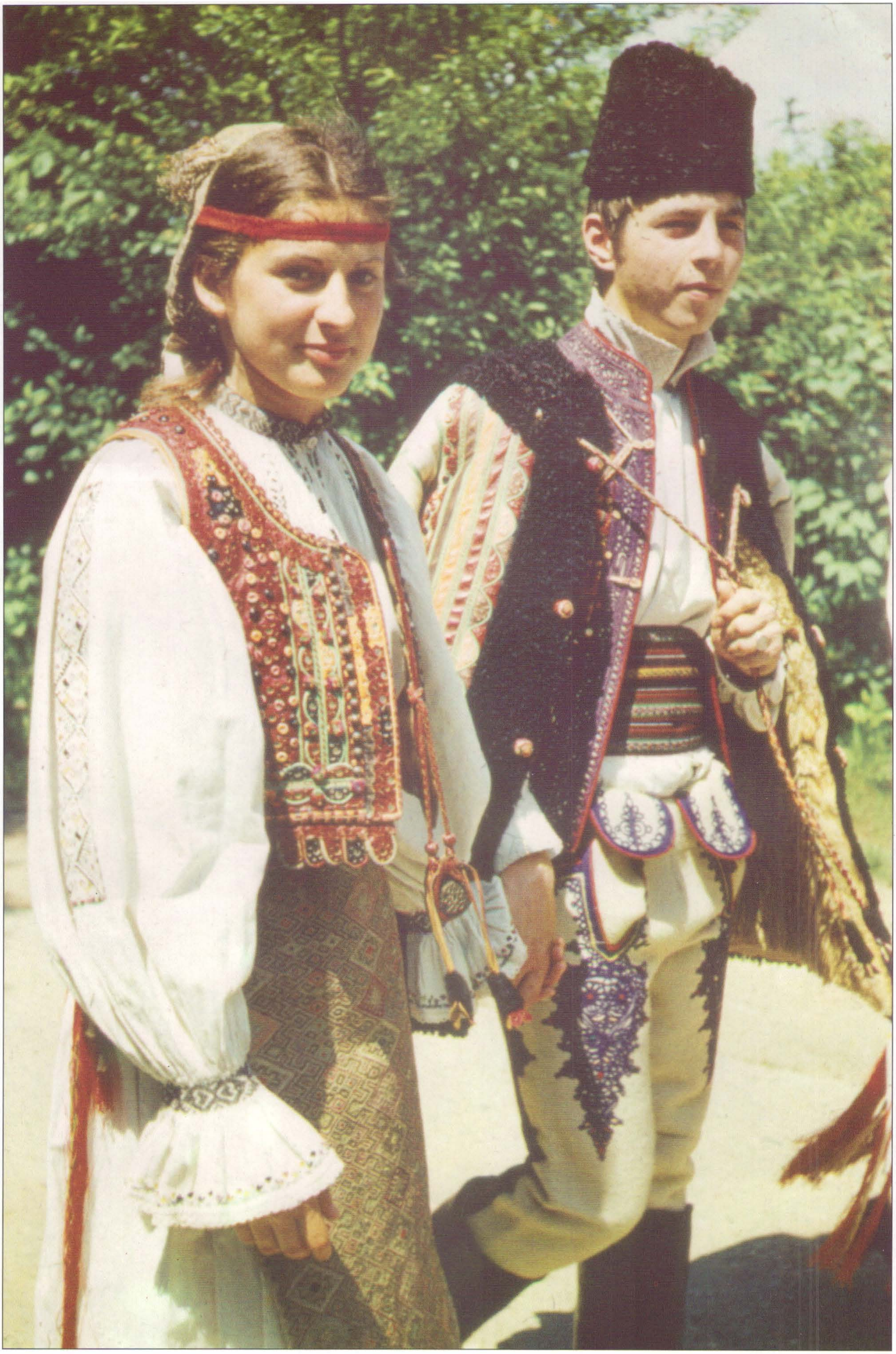
The male costume has also been influenced by the Moldavian costume, taking over the Moldavian creased on the legs *iţari* made of cloth with the warp of hemp and the filling of wool that is not thickened in the fulling mill. Another element that was adopted from the Moldavian costume was the position of ornaments on the waistcoats, taken over from the similarly ornamented costume pieces of the Bistriţa Valley - Neamţ district.

This is an example of a phenomenon of irradiation of an extremely well defined type of costume - the Moldavian costume - towards the neighbouring areas of the districts Suceava, Neamţ and Bacău, in the Romanian communities whose people took over the costume of their neighbours and adapted it to their own life conditions and aesthetic taste.

The few significant aspects of the Transylvanian folk costume presented above outline its great typological diversity and the wide range of morphologic and decorative solutions that contribute to its value.

A folk costume from the Land of Bârsa →





Banat

Against the overall picture of the Romanian folk costume, the female folk costume of Banat is individualized by the occurrence of specific elements like the tasselled *opreg* and the bonnet-shaped head covers of ancient tradition.

The abundant use of the gold and silver shining thread in the ornamentation of the shirt, *opreg* and *conci* confers to the female costume of Banat an elegant and pompous look that has no match in other areas of the country.

In the field area of Banat (Timişoara – Lugoj – Buziaş), the *conci* was made of warp of hemp and filling of golden or silver metallic thread or of silk, with a yellow or red (*cărmăjin*) background and it was woven in special small looms. The geometrical ornamental motives that would adorn the *conci* (lozenge, triangle, zigzag) were woven with thin cord and metallic thread and they were extremely fine. By using the weaving "on the inside" (with a mirror placed under the loom), women could watch the making of the pattern on the outside.

Besides the woven *conci*, women in the zone Lugoj – Buziaş would wear the money *conci*, decorated on its whole surface with rows of silver coins in a fish-scale pattern. This head decoration would be named *tulbent of money* in the west of Timiş district and its decoration would be completed by metallic vine leaves, placed between the rows of silver coins. The *tulbent* would be ornamented at the back by two ribbons with floral print and sewn in the shape of a flower. Across the forehead the women would wear a ribbon called *partă* with a special decorative effect due to the coins that were sewn on it. Two other identical ribbons called *plecenici* were fixed to the lower sides of the *tulbent* and would hang loose down the back. Only specialized craftsmen knew how to make the *conci with money*.

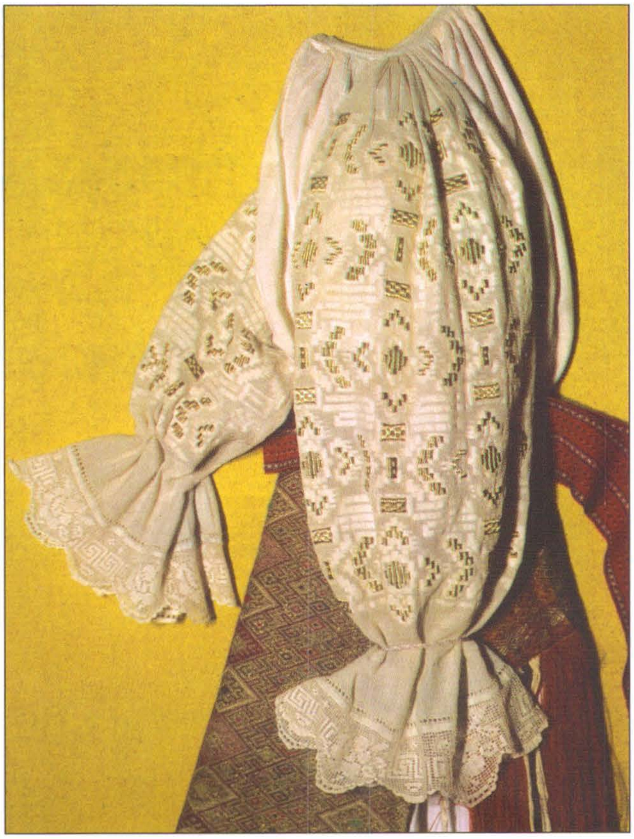
The shirt (named locally *spăcel* or *ciupag*) was made of a creased or streaked cloth (named *cloth of cinari*), the woven stripes being obtained by using a thicker and a thinner cotton thread in the warp. This special cloth that the Romanian population of Voivodina (Serbia) also used amplified the aesthetic value of this representatively Banat shirt. It was a Carpathian shirt with sleeves ended with flounces. The decorative elements sewn with white, black and golden thread would be placed on the collar, breast and sleeves. The sleeves would be richly ornamented either with a compact tubular sewn pattern called locally *urzariu* or with *pene* – isolated motives. The ancient decorative technique "warped on the pleats" is used to decorate the space below the collar and the band of the flounce. The traditional shirt had exclusively golden thread ornamentation sewn with an oriental technique and the front of the shirt would be empty of ornament.

The second distinctive element of the female costume of Banat was the *tasselled opreg*, initially worn in pairs and woven in the same technique and with the same geometrical motives as the *conci*, thus creating a prefect decorative and chromatic correspondence.

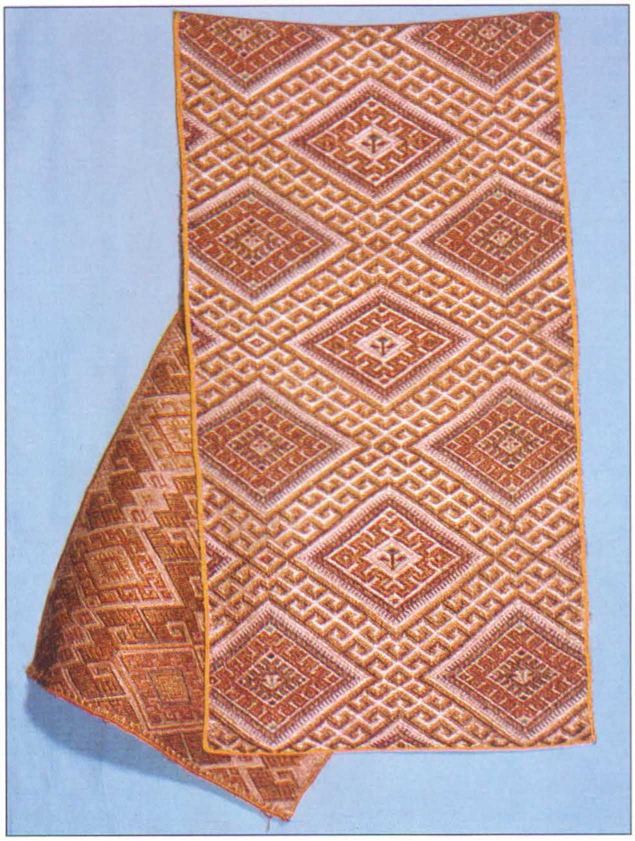
The patch (*obadă*) – the upper part woven of wool hair – was streaked, sewn or with a woven pattern or it could be streaked and with woven patterns made with coloured wool and metallic thread. It had a dark blue or red background, depending on the age of the woman. A decorative band made of metallic thread cords or printed ribbons would be fixed on the lateral sides and along the hem. The old *oprege* have a bigger *patch* that represents more that half of the length of the piece.

The brightly coloured wool or silk fringes (tassels – *ciocoţi* or *chiţele*) would be always in harmony with the chromatic of the woven part, creating an impressing artistic effect. The proportion between the *patch* and the length of the fringes, the ornamental composition of the woven part and the chromatic composition of the fringes would indicate the provenience zone of an *opreg*.

← *Folk costumes from the Banat Plains*



Typical shirt from the Banat area



***Catrinţe** from the Banat Plains*

The back *opreg* would be worn only by married women in the traditional clothing of Banat, while the girls would wear only a front *opreg*, a practice that the Romanians of Voivodina have observed to this day. In the plain area of Banat we identify a reminiscence of this practice in the custom of dressing the bride with a back *opreg* adorned with money.[23]

Women in the area of circulation of the *conci with money* had *oprege* with a *patch* ornamented exactly as the bonnet, and the perfect concordance of the head-dress and the costume pieces that dressed the body from the waist down created a powerful visual effect.

The *opreg* had also a ceremonial signification in the past, as it was put in the coffin to cast away the evil spirits.[24]

Gradually, the front *opreg* was replaced by a *catrinţă* (*cotrânţă* or *cătrinţă*) woven of black, red or dark red wool and with an ornamentation system that had two stages: the vertical streaking and then the polychrome geometrical woven pattern.

The *catrinţe* with a compact woven pattern made with gold and silver thread were considered very precious.

In the cold season, the festive female folk costume would be completed with the waistcoats open in the front, embroidered with cotton or coloured silk and adorned with applications of *irhă* (special strands of leather on which the ornamental motives would be sewn) along the cut lines, leather buttons and mirrors; with the ample long sheepskin coats with lateral gores and a very rich decoration, trimmed with Astrakhan fur; and with the frieze *şube* with white or dark blue background ornamented with applied *şinioare* (cords).

Another elegant winter coat was the *mincie*, made of sheepskin doubled with black velvet on the outside and decorated with applications of *şinioare* of golden and silver metallic thread in the shape of stylized floral motives. The *mincie* had otter or fox fur trimmings around the collar, along the front opening, on the laps and around the sleeves. It was an extremely expensive coat and only the well-off women in the plain areas of the Romanian and Serbian Banat could afford to buy such coats.

The male costume of Timiş is characterized by the long straight shirt that men would wear in the summer over the relatively large cloth trousers decorated with white sewn patterns on the lower parts and in the winter they would introduce the end of the shirt in the *cioareci* made of white cloth (*habă*) and ornamented with coloured *şinioare* made of braided wool threads.

The decoration of the straight shirt with pleated sleeves attached along the shoulders and ended with cuffs (*pumnari*) was composed of artistic seams – with functional and aesthetic attributes – sewn on the visible parts of the material by using different techniques and of *şabace* (a decoration with threads drawn from the material which was sewn with white thread) worked with great skill.

The pleats of the ample elegant shirt would be fastened on by girdles (*brâu* or *chimir*).

The *chintuş* (cloth vest) worn over the shirt with white decoration was ornamented all over its surface by vegetal motives sewn with coloured silk thread and added a colourful expressiveness to the costume.

The male costume of Banat was completed by the sheepskin coat and by the white frieze *şubă*, richly ornamented with black *şinioare* and also by the green frieze *duruţ* that had a similar cut to that of the frieze coats specific for the Danube Plain.

The women in the mountain area of Banat would preserve the archaic hairdo with *corni* (*dârlogi, cofârţe*) that resembled the hairdo *with horns*, which is part of an ancient cultural background shared by many Asian and European peoples, as I pointed out in the previous pages. In Banat, the women would braid their hair into two plaits thickened and strengthened with *corni* (wool

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[23-24] Aristida Turcuş, *Portul popular românesc din judeţul Timiş* (*The Romanian Folk Costume in the Timiş District*), p. 34.

strands wrapped in black cloth) and turn them below and around the years as two semicircles that were then drawn to the back and crossed on the nape of the neck. Then the plaits were raised on the crown of the head and sewn together.

The *ceapsă* – the distinctive sign of the married woman – would be placed over the hairdo.

According to their shape and cut, there are a few local-zonal variants of *ceapsă*.[25] The triangular *ceapsă* characteristic to the Bozovici-Almăj basin seems to have the oldest cut. It is widespread and has many variants according to the manner of assembling the two components of the piece: the bottom of the *ceapsă* and the *obadă*. The triangular *ceapsă* would be ornamented by sewing or weaving patterns with cotton or soft wool threads. Sometimes, the two ornamental techniques would coexist on the same piece, enhancing its artistic value.

The background colour of the *ceapsă* was always white, contrasting with the tones of black, dark blue or dark brown of the geometrical decorations sewn "on the thread" with coloured soft wool thread and creating a highly harmonious balance in alternation with the unornamented spaces. The dark ornamental field would be brightened up by the light colours of the lace, cord or little sewn corners that would border the *ceapsă* of the younger women.

The woman would fix their *ceapsă* across the forehead with a black ribbon or with a leather strap that would get aesthetical attributes on holidays when it was ornamented with gold or silver coins.

Another form of *ceapsă*, spread in the Bistra Valley and in the Romanian villages of Timoc is the rectangular one, decorated with geometrical motives based on the lozenge and compactly sewn with *bircă* (soft wool thread) all over the piece.

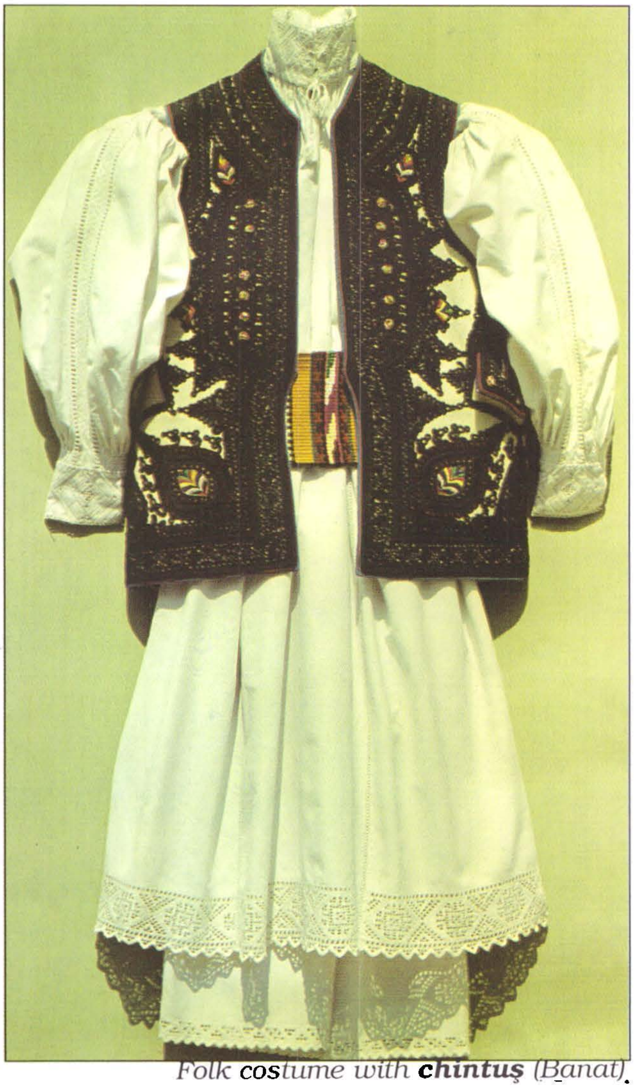
The *long cloth* (the kerchief) would be placed over the *ceapsă*. This kerchief, ornamented at the ends with geometrical patterns sewn "on the fir" with soft wool thread, was replaced at the beginning of the 19th century by the *head kerchief* of a square shape, bought from tradesmen and made of diverse materials: wool hair (*păruţ*), silk, cashmere, velvet (*pliş*, *somot*).

The function of the *ceapsă* was taken over in the last decades of the 19th century by the *small cloth* of triangular shape that was initially made of white house woven cloth and then bought from the stores. Women would cover their head with this small cloth and tie its ends at the back and then they would wear the square big cloth over the small one.

Women in the mountainous area of Banat would wear costumes with the same elements: shirt pleated around the neck, fringed *opreg* and *catrinţă*.

The oldest type of shirt in Banat was the shirt pleated around the neck and with sewn laps. The holiday shirt would be made of cotton. It had a collar band, a front slide and the sleeves could be large and loose, tightened with a band (*obidea*) or ended with flounces. Two or three rows of starched lace would be sewn sometimes below the collar, where the shirt would be creased on a thread "on the rim of the pleats" along a 10 cm wide piece of material (it was called shirt with *creţură*).

The decoration would be placed on the collar, breast (rows), sleeves (rows or *wide tables*), flounces (buds and lace) and on the laps. The geometrical motives would be dominant: a frequent pattern was the one with big lozenges that framed other geometrical or vegetal motives sewn with dyed cotton thread in light colours for young women and dark colours (black, dark blue, brown) for older women. Among the



Folk costume with **chintuş** (Banat).

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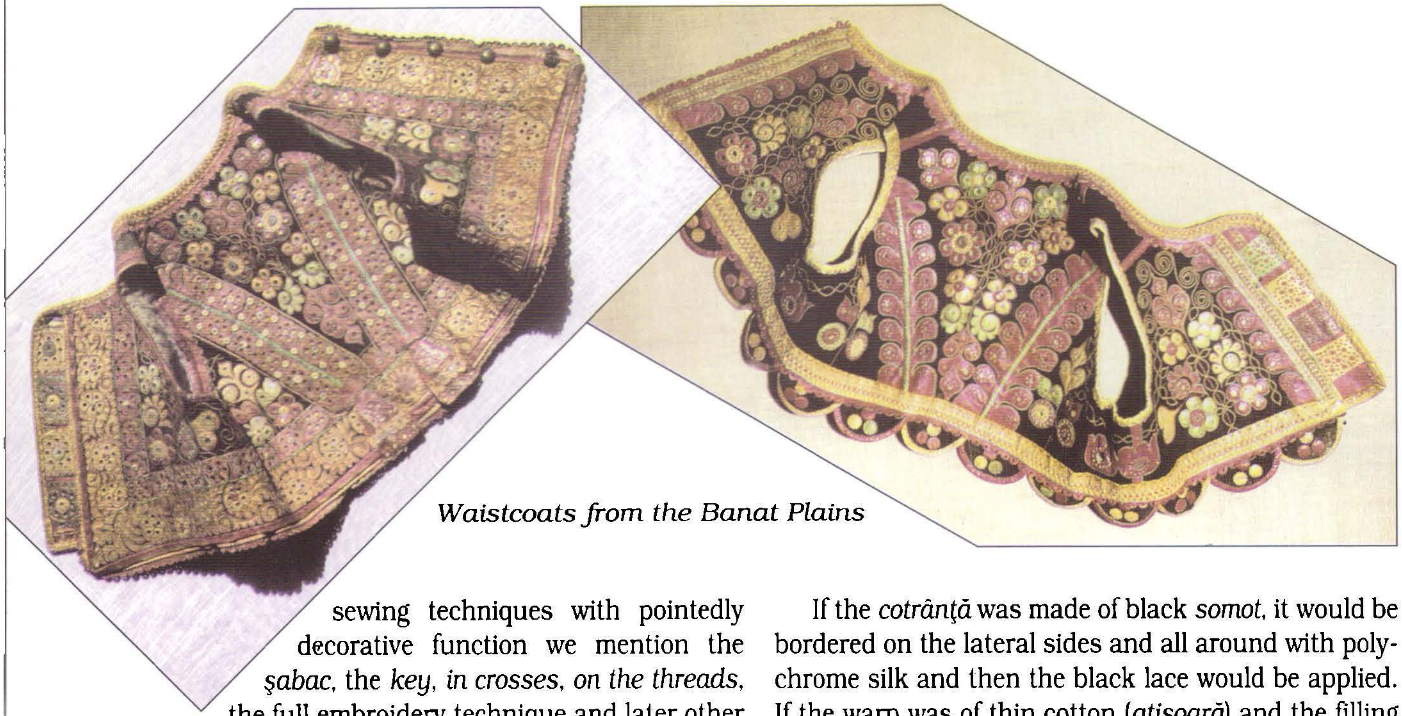
[25] Aristida Turcuş, *Pieptănătura şi găteala capului la femeile din Banat* (*Hairdo and Headdress at the Women in Banat*), pp. 135-136.



Waistcoats from the Banat Plains

sewing techniques with pointedly decorative function we mention the *şabac*, the *key*, *in crosses*, *on the threads*, the full embroidery technique and later other sewing techniques like the *sift* (*ciur*) – pierced embroidery, *the cut* (embroidery that was festooned and then cut along the outline), *in sticks* (*în toiege*) or *Goblin* (*mustre*).

The shirt would be sometimes ornamented with yellow sequins fixed with beads.

Women wore front and back *oprege* before 1900 and a back *opreg* associated to a front *catrinţă* after that date.

The *oprege* (*chiţele*) would be woven of wool hair and then they would be made of industrial materials: silk and *somot*. The patch of the *opreg* was decorated according to various techniques: the streaked weaving, the sewing with different techniques and the patterned weaving.

The decoration was mainly composed of geometrical motives initially sewn with polychrome soft wool thread and then with dyed cotton or silk. A decorative ribbon with applied beads, sequins and tinsel would be attached to the lateral sides and low border of the patch.

The tassels (fringes) were made of twisted woollen filaments, silk or metallic threads.

The front *catrinţă* (*cotrânţă*) was initially made of wool hair with a red or black background, depending on the age of the woman who would wear it. The lower part of the piece was woven with a pattern made of yellow thread or of white and yellow silk. The decoration of the woven wool *catrinţă* could also be placed on the lateral sides and it was composed of streaks called *bete* (a wider one framed by two narrow ones) and made of warp.

If the *cotrânţă* was made of black *somot*, it would be bordered on the lateral sides and all around with polychrome silk and then the black lace would be applied. If the warp was of thin cotton (*aţişoară*) and the filling of white or yellow metallic thread, it would be ornamented with motives sewn with soft wool thread and bordered with bought lace.

The triangular *ceapsă*, the woolen streaked *brăcină* and the back *opreg* were ceremonial costume pieces that marked the passing of the girl to the status of married woman.[26]

The winter coats made of fur and frieze have added to the aesthetic impression made by the women's folk costumes.

Women used to wear partly open waistcoats, embroidered "in circle" with red nuances of *bircă* before 1900. In the early 20th century these waistcoats were replaced with brown sewn up waistcoats (*burduşele*) ornamented with applied velvet, cord and ribbons.

Another elegant winter coat was the white frieze (*cioarec*) *şubă* thickened and made by local craftsmen. It was long below the knees slightly flaring because of its lateral gores. It had a small or turned up collar and it was decorated by stylized floral motives obtained by applying black *şinior* (a cord made of four braided strands) and a few red and green pieces of cloth or by sewing the patterns with black *bârnaş* (made of five-six braided threads) around the ends of the sleeves, along the front opening and on the laps.

The white *şubă* was replaced after the first decades of the 20th century by the *bundă* – a coat made of sheepskin doubled with *somot* on the outside and with a collar made of fox, polecat or marten fur.

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[26] Lidia Gaga, *Zona etnografică Almăj* (*The Almăj Ethnographic Zone*), p. 129.

The component pieces of the male costume were: the cap with an older variant that was worn with the fur on the outside and looked like the bonnet of the Dacian nobles; the felt hat; the straight shirt with large sleeves and ornamentation with white *şabace* or other decorative elements sewn with white silk or polychrome dyed cotton in different techniques ("on the threads", "on the inside", "in crosses", "full embroidery on numbered threads") on the small collar, shoulders, breast, along the sleeve hems or on the cuffs and on the laps; the white frieze *cioareci* tight on the legs and decorated with applied *şinioare* (black cord) on the lateral sides and on the pockets; the summer cloth trousers ornamented with white *şabace* and ended with white lace or tassels (fringes) that prolonged the warp.

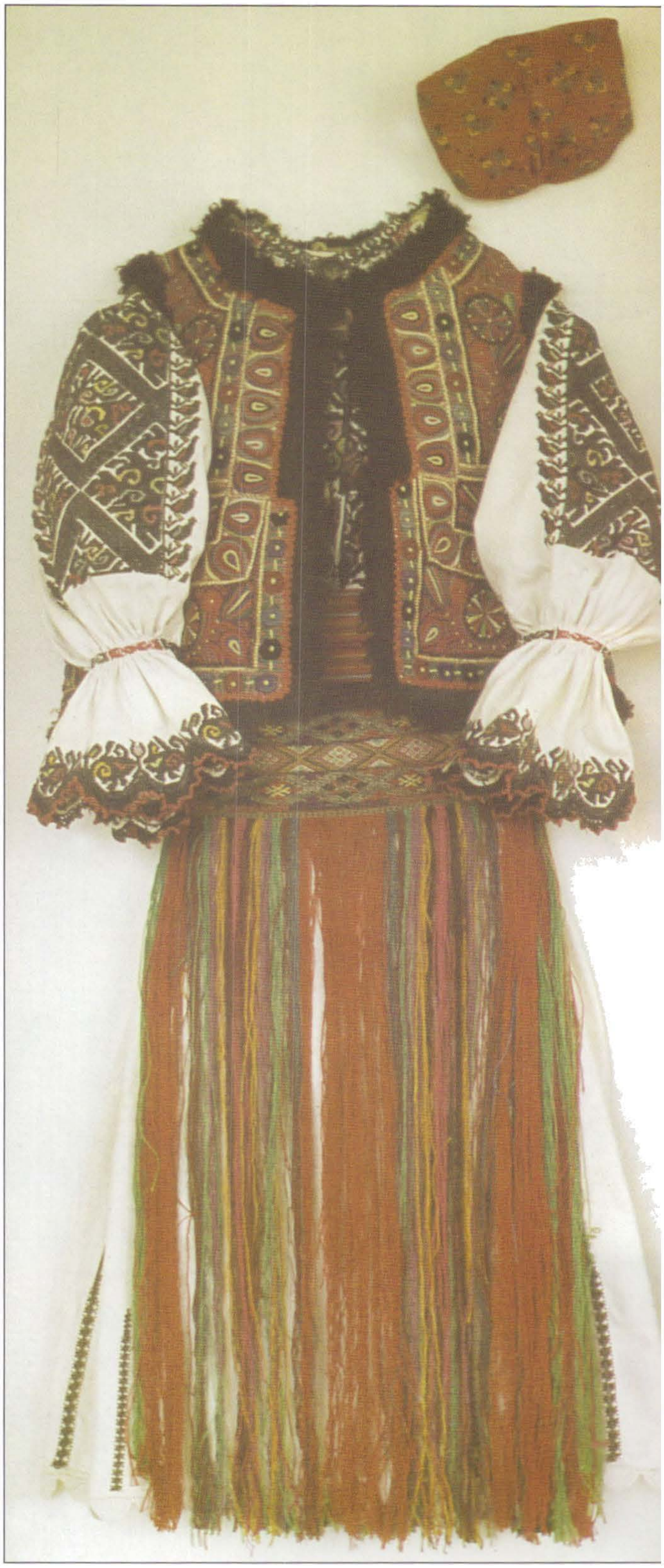
The male costume was completed by the grey or black frieze *laibăr* (vest), the sewn up waistcoats, the white sheepskin coats and *şube* richly decorated with applied cords.

The costume of the zone Oraviţa stands out for its round *ceapsă* (bonnet) with *munună*, decorated with geometrical motives sewn with red and black threads. On holidays, women would wear the *ceapsă* associated with the *munună* composed of polychrome beads and of a necklace made of silver coins fixed on a crown-like cardboard support.

The tasselled *opreg* in this area was worn in pairs and had a wider woven patch than the patch in other areas in Banat.

As in the other Banat areas, the male costume pieces in the Oraviţa zone were decorated with wide white seams sewn with great skill and constituting a distinctive mark of the folk costume in the whole region.

The refined decoration on the male folk costumes (white sewing on white material) created a powerful contrast with the colour explosion and the brightness of the female costume pieces (*conci, catrinţă, opreg*) decorated abundantly with gold and silver metallic thread ornaments.



Folk costume from the mountainous Banat (Valea Bistrei)

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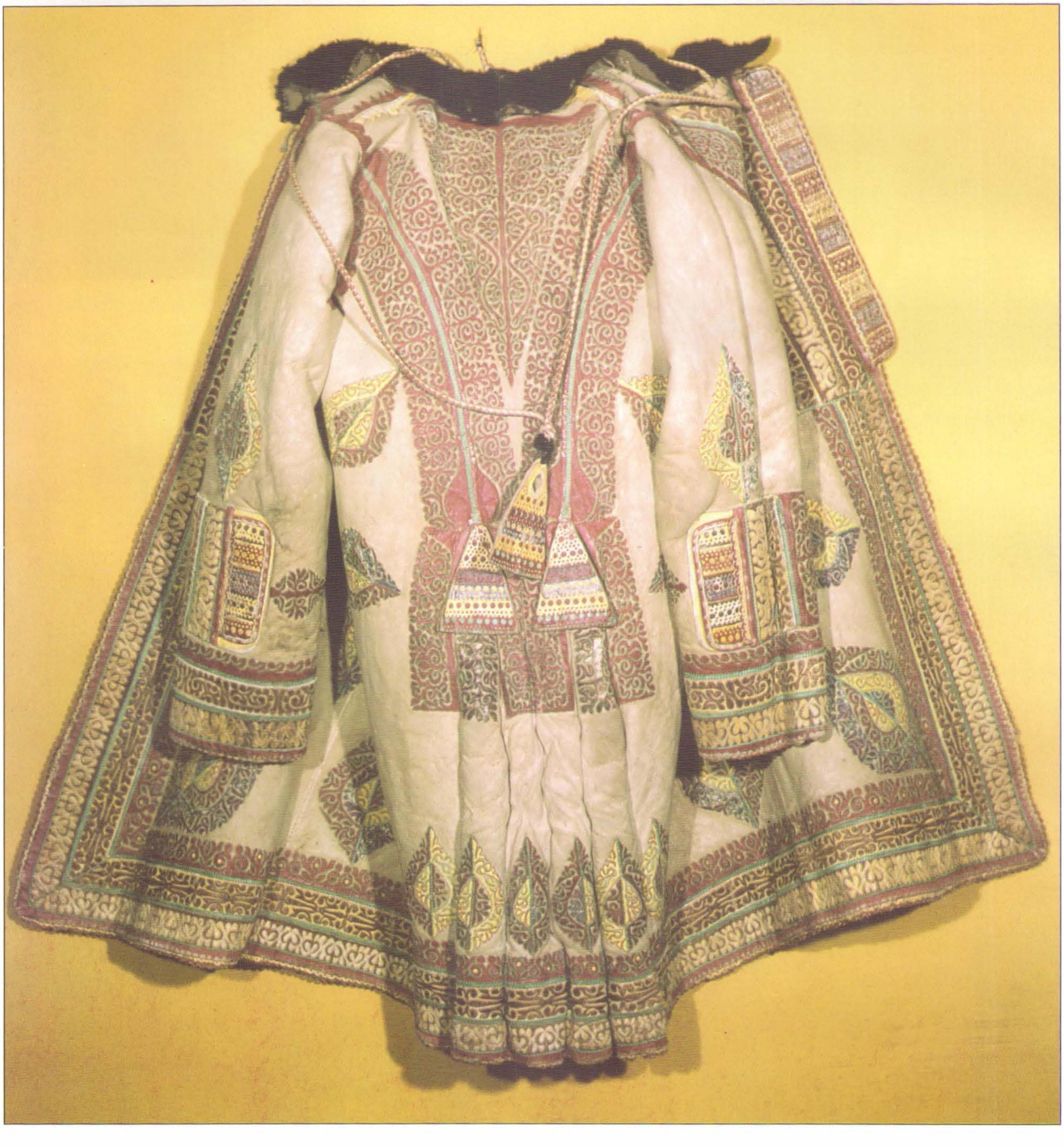
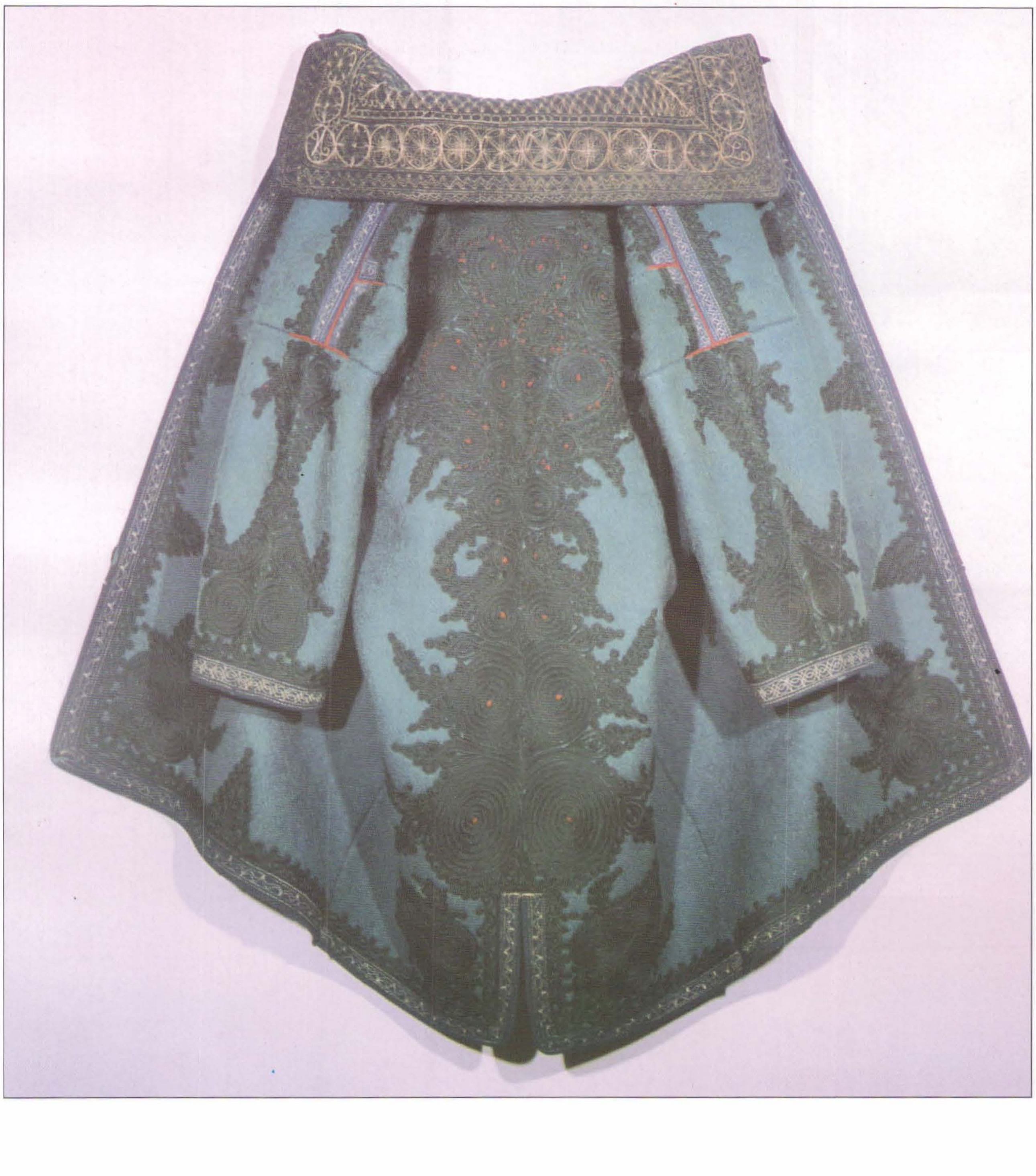
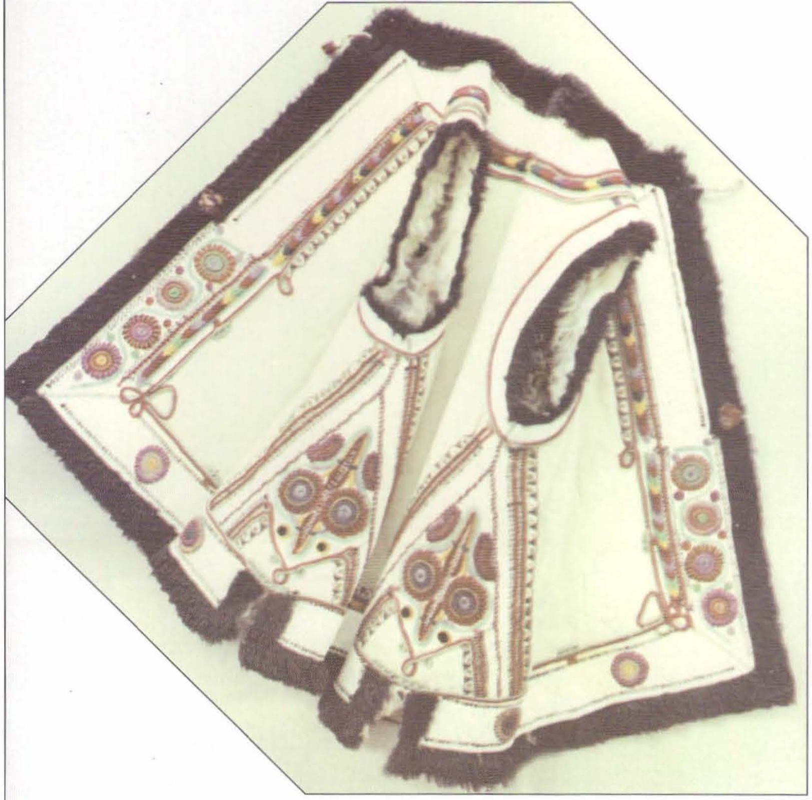
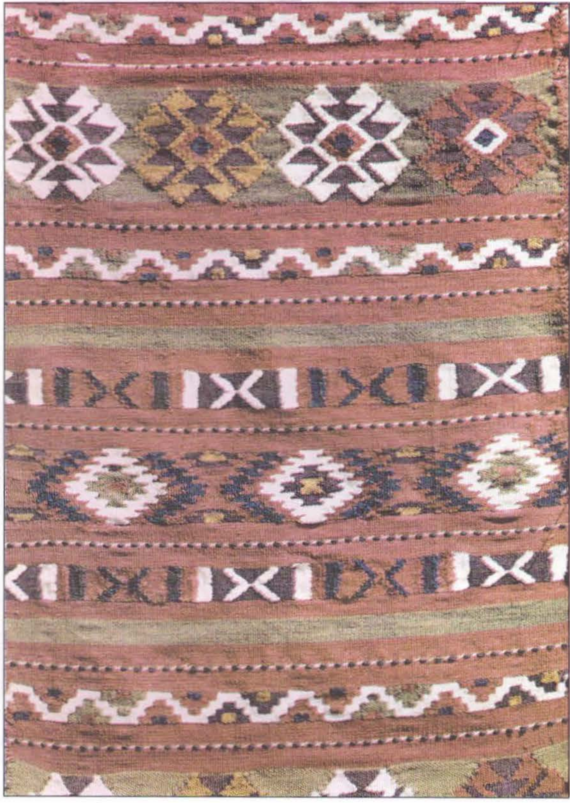
Sheepskin coat and ***şubă*** *from Banat (pages 128-129)*



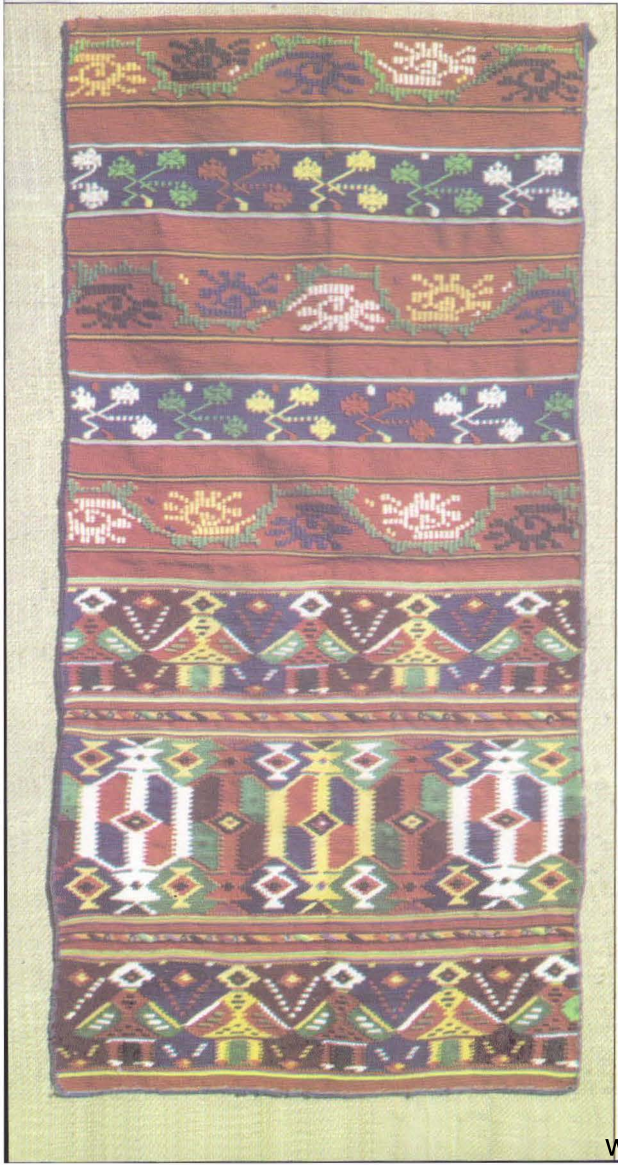




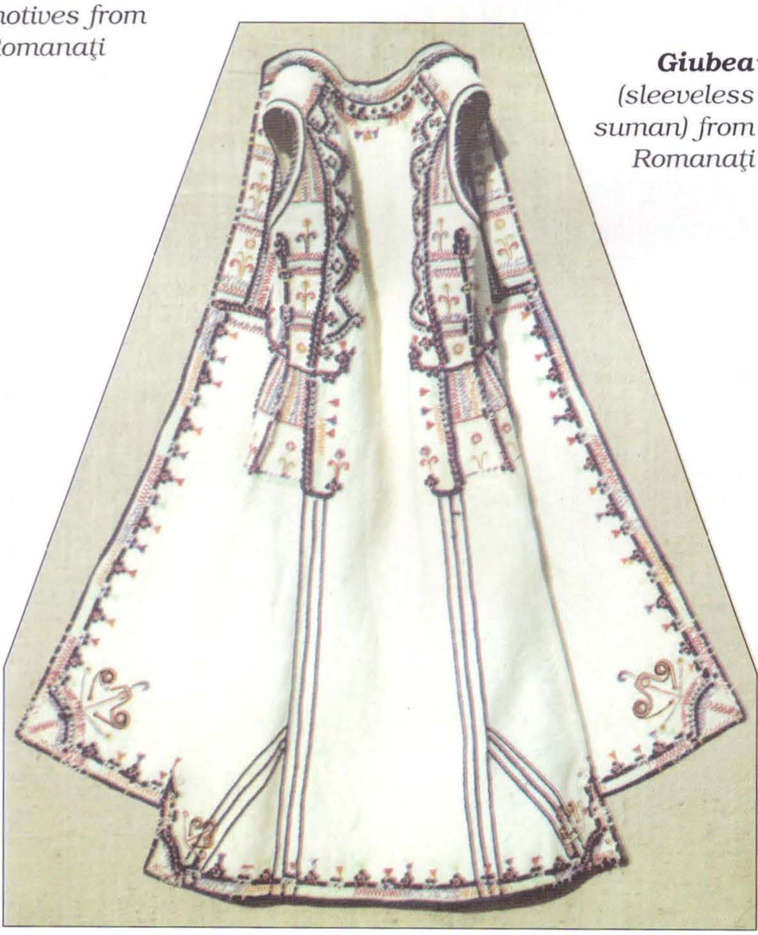
Waistcoat with **cosoaie** from the Romanaţi area



Boscea with geometrical motives, specific for the zone Dolj



Boscea with anthropomorphic motives from Romanaţi



Giubea (sleeveless suman) from Romanaţi

Oltenia

A traveller who would stop for a moment of rest in the quiet interior of a church in Oltenia would feel the presence of the founders in the votive pictures – be they boyars, tradesmen, administrators, bailiffs or free peasants – whom the Romanian painters of the Hurezi school portrayed wearing authentic folk costumes that reflected the peak moment of the feudal art during the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu.

Men on horseback with white cloth coats on their shoulders are painted on the exterior friezes of the churches. They are the *potecaşi* – the path guardians who watch over the land.

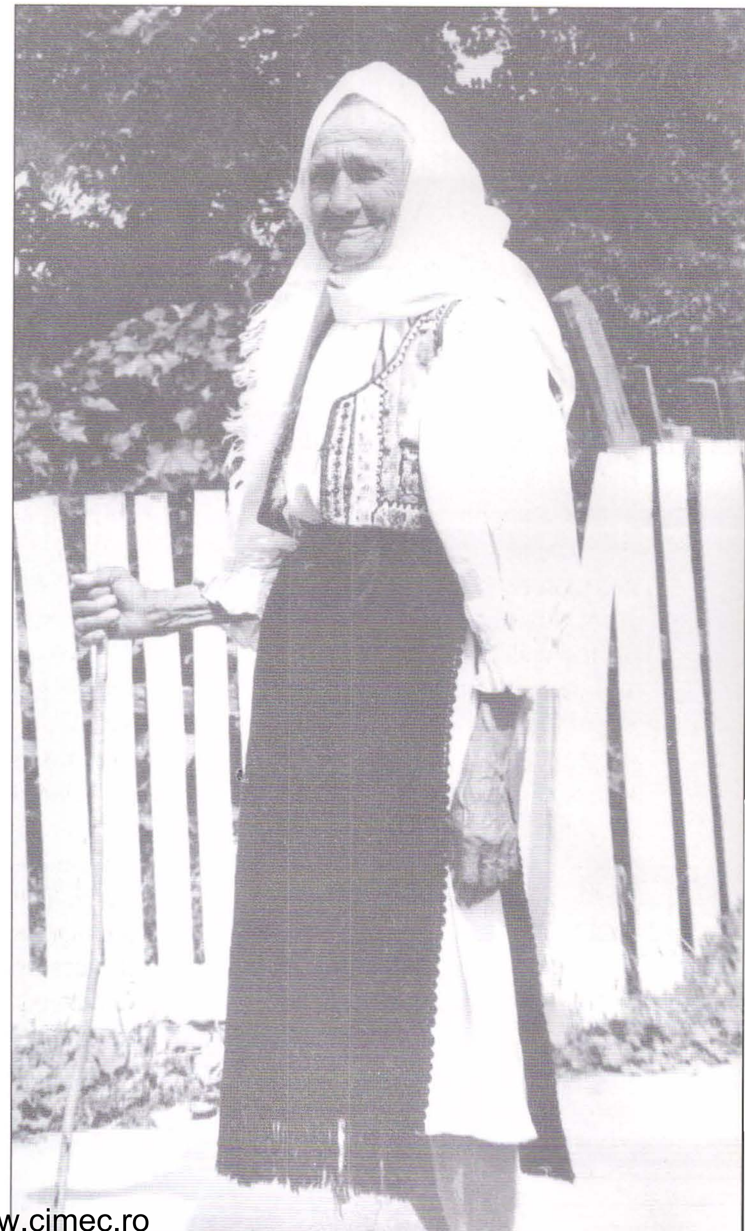
Wives of stewards, ladies and peasant women wearing rich *vâlnice* and shirts with artistically sewn motives are painted on the church walls and their faces look noble and distinguished. Oltenia has proved to be an extremely conservatory ethno-folkloric zone where authentic values and rich traditions have been stored and generated, some specifically local, others common to all Romanian counties.

According to its morphologic structure, the folk costume in Oltenia is part of the typology of the costume with *vâlnic* and of the costume with *catrinţe*, which are differently appreciated in the traditional rural community: the costume with *vâlnic*, specific only for Oltenia, was mostly worn on holidays or on ceremonial occasions (the bride and the godmother would wear it at the weddings in the districts Mehedinţi and Vâlcea); the costume with paired *catrinţe*, widespread on the entire Romanian territory, was considered more like a work costume, although sometimes women would wear it on holidays or during the wedding ceremony.

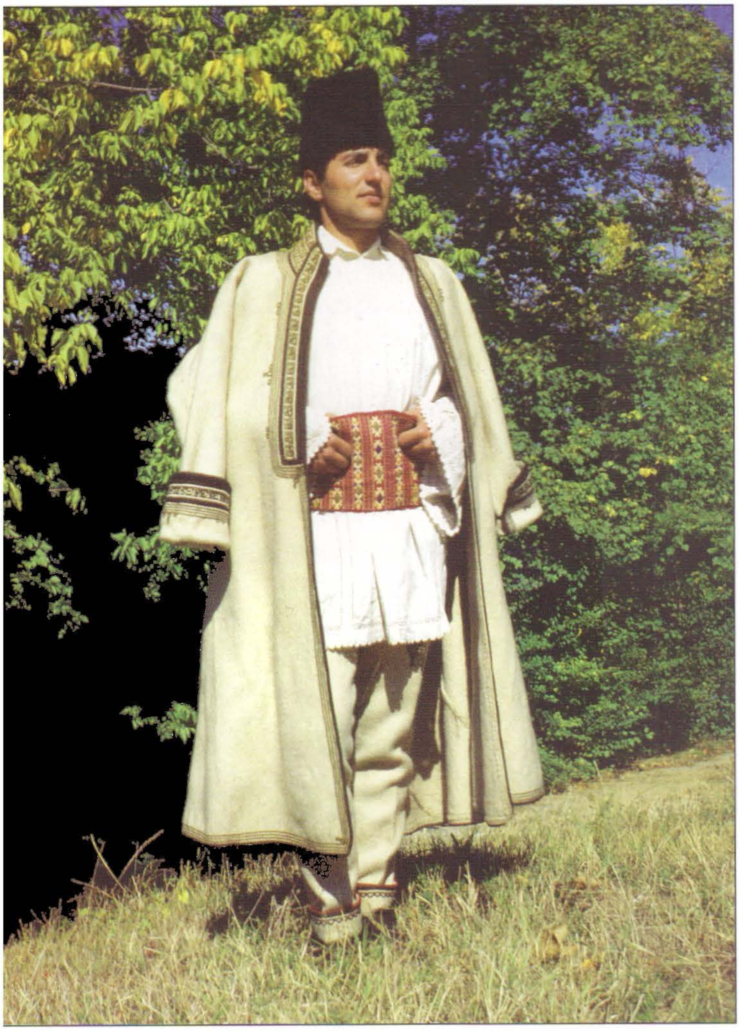
As regards the materials, weaving techniques and cut, there were significant differences between the costumes in the north and in the south of Oltenia, the latter assimilating the oriental Balkan influence of the areas across the Danube. The influence of the Orient was transmitted on different paths and it was exerted in several stages. For example, the golden thread that ornamented discreetly the old costume pieces, combined with the metallic thread, was gradually used more intensely, covering big surfaces in the ornamental fields of *vâlnice* and *catrinţe* and conferring them the opulence characteristic to the oriental clothes.

The shirts and *catrinţe* in Oltenia are often decorated with traditional geometrical patterns beside which vegetal and zoomorphic motives appear, resembling to the frequent motives of Persian and Central Asian art.

On the other hand, due in a high degree to the shepherds' moving of flocks, there were always close connections between the inhabitants of Oltenia and the Romanians across the Carpathians, the continuous exchange of cultural goods between the two groups determining the common circulation in both areas of some costume pieces and decorative elements. The *ungureni* (shepherds from Mărginimea Sibiului who would go down the mountains with their flocks looking for pastures) settled among the locals of Oltenia and they contributed to the spreading of the *ungurenesc* costume, which is described below. The female *ungurenesc* costume was composed of a shirt pleated around the neck and decorated with *brâne*, *ciocănele* (*little hammers*) or *umbreje* (rows of black sewn patterns) bordered by narrow rows placed along the front slide and on the sleeves ended with flounces; paired *şoarţe* (*aprons*) made of wool woven in the technique of the four threads, with black background, ornamented all over its surface with horizontal streaks and motives woven "by hand" in the loom. with soft wool or dyed



Traditional clothing from Novaci (Gorj district)



Traditional clothing with homespun cloth ***şubă*** *(Vâlcea district)*

cotton thread or aprons made of industrial cloth and ornamented on the laps with golden thread and with black or brown silk.

The *ungurenesc* costume of men was composed of an extremely ample shirt with *barburi* that had 11 gores on each side and was ornamented with motives sewn with black dyed cotton thread and golden thread on the collar, along the neck slide, along the *barburi* and at the lower ends of the large loose sleeves. Men would fasten on their shirts with a wide woollen girdle decorated at the visible end with woven patterns and with wool *bete* with differently coloured woven patterns on the length; or they would use leather *şerpar* or *chimir* with three buckles (straps) and two pockets – on for flint and tinder and the other for money. The next costume piece is the pair of tight *cioareci ungureneşti* made of white cloth and sewn over the seams with white thread. Men would also wear – hanging down from their *chimir* – a *kerchief* (*handkerchief*) woven with coloured streaks at the margins (hand woven with red, black and white dyed cotton thread) and ended with twisted and tied tassels.

The old technique of "warping on the pleats" was also brought across the mountains by the *ungureni*.[27]

The two-way influences exerted upon the population on both sides of the southern Carpathians are reflected by the circulation of costume elements. The Romanians on the northern mountainside adopted from the inhabitants of Oltenia the female shirt with *altiţă*, the ornamentation with sequins, some costume pieces like the *ipingea* and a series of decorative techniques: the Oltenian weaving with pattern in the 20th century and the hand weaving in *cocleţi* during the 20th century.[28]

The folk costumes in the mountainous and hilly areas in the north of Oltenia were preferably made of resistant materials like the thick cotton cloth woven in two threads while in the plain villages a thinner streaked fabric was used, sometimes of the delicate raw silk thread. The northern costumes were characterized by archaism and sober background and chromatics and these features were in contrast to the various forms, the colour exuberance, the refinement and highly skilful technique used to create the costume in the plain villages.

The basic element of the female costume of the region is the kerchief, locally known as *cârpă* and made of cotton and later of raw silk. Women wouldn't wear the *cârpă* directly over the hair putting it always over a *tulpan*, fez or head kerchief. The ornamental ranges of the kerchief were placed towards the margins of the material and consisted of simple streaks or groups of streaks for older pieces, made in the filling or in the warp with hemp or linen filaments and later with prominent thick cotton thread. In time, the ornamentation of the kerchief would include woven patterns that represented stylized geometrical and vegetal motives, placed towards the ends of the material or rhythmically placed on the entire surface of the piece.

The triangular head cover was known by different names in Oltenia: *handkerchief, strand of handkerchief, tie, coalţă, poş, fişon, gore, horn*. It was widespread and women of all ages would wear it. On holidays, this head cover would be decorated along the margins with "corners" (worked initially by needle and then by crochet in which polychrome beads were intro-

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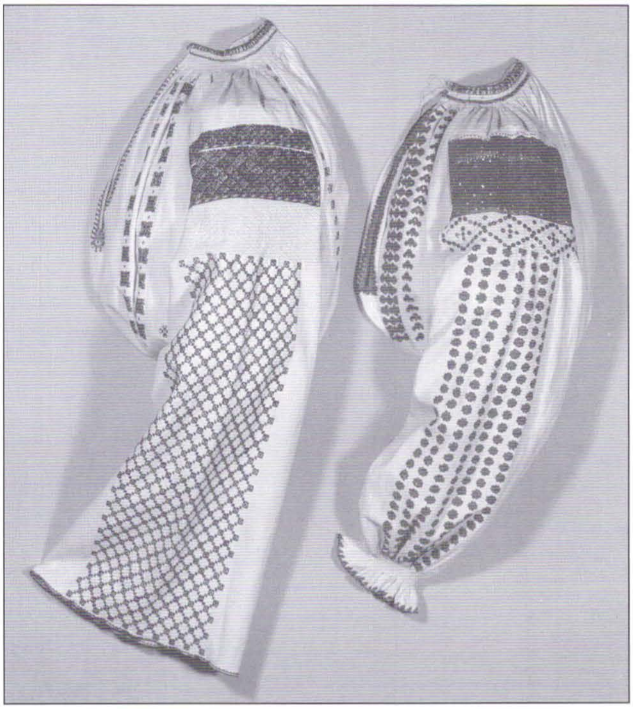
[27] Nicolae Dunăre, *Relaţii etnografice între ţinuturile de pe ambele versante ale Carpaţilor (Ethnographic Relations of the Counties on Both Mountainsides of the Carpathians)*, p. 200.

[28] *Idem, Influenţe reciproce în portul şi textilele populare de pe ambele versante ale Carpaţilor Meridionali (Mutual Influences in Folk Costume and Textiles on both Mountainsides of the Southern Carpathians)*, pp. 192-193.



Shirts from Mehedinţi pleated around the neck, ornamented with ***altiţă***, ***increţ*** *and* ***rânduri***

duced. The long side that framed the forehead would be ornamented by small motives sewn with white or coloured silk.

The young girls and women in Dolj and Romanaţi areas would wear a red fez with the front margin ornamented by gold or silver coins, over which they would place a kerchief (*ştergar* or *maramă*), richly decorated with woven patterns and streaks.

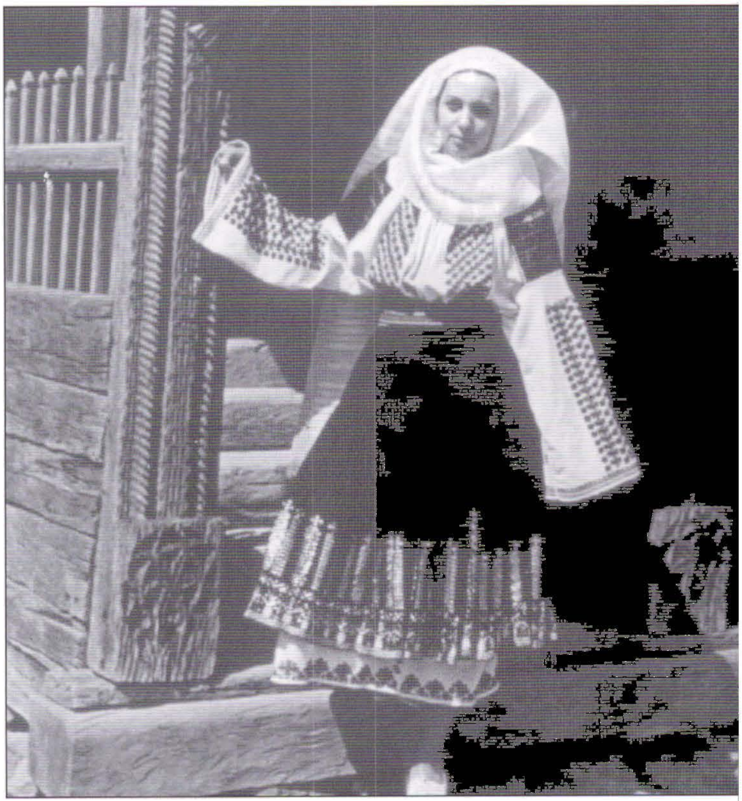
The female shirt – which is a reference for the adjusting (as stage of evolution, decoration and chromatics) of all the component pieces of the female costume – is represented in Oltenia by two fundamental types: the straight shirt with the sleeves attached to the shoulders, most frequent in the plain areas, and the shirt pleated around the neck (characterized by the creasing of the total width of the *stani* and the upper part of the sleeves).

The pleated shirt had remarkably artistic variants, with diverse decorative compositions adorned abundantly with polychrome beads, tinsel and metallic sequins that created a sumptuous composition. The decoration was sewn or woven and it was placed on the collar, breast, back (sometimes), sleeves and laps.

The three ornamental ranges used to decorate the sleeves were called *altiţă*, *increţ* (*pleat*) and *râuri* (*streams*). Sometimes, the sleeves were decorated only by the *altiţă* and the sleeve band or by *altiţă* and *streams* or just by straight or oblique *streams* (rows) that could generate a multitude of variants.

The *altiţă* was cut separately for the shirts in Vâlcea and Mehedinţi districts. It was composed of four-six horizontal rows of sewn patterns and one separate upper row called *mărginaş* (the margin row) in Vâlcea. The *altiţă* was sewn by taking a single thread of the material once with the needle (*la un fir*), as a seam (*în piezuri*) and as a chain (*în lanţ*). The cut with the separate *altiţă* was no longer used beginning with the 20th century. The pleat below the *altiţă* was always sewn by using a different technique and a differently coloured thread (at first, the natural white-yellowish of the hemp fibre, then other colours too).

There were also variants of shirts with compactly decorated sleeves (*shirt with fur* in Mehedinţi and Vâlcea districts), predominantly with geometrical motives that would cover entirely the material, leaving no empty spaces. This compact decoration is explained by the influence of the style in Transylvania, as such decorations (called *table*) made by sewing or weaving the patterns were also common on the sleeves of the women's shirts in Pădureni, the western zone of the Land of Haţeg, the Land of Almăj, the Bistra Valley, the Timiş Low Plain, the Arad Plain.[29]



Costume with ***opreg*** *and necklace from Mehedinţi*

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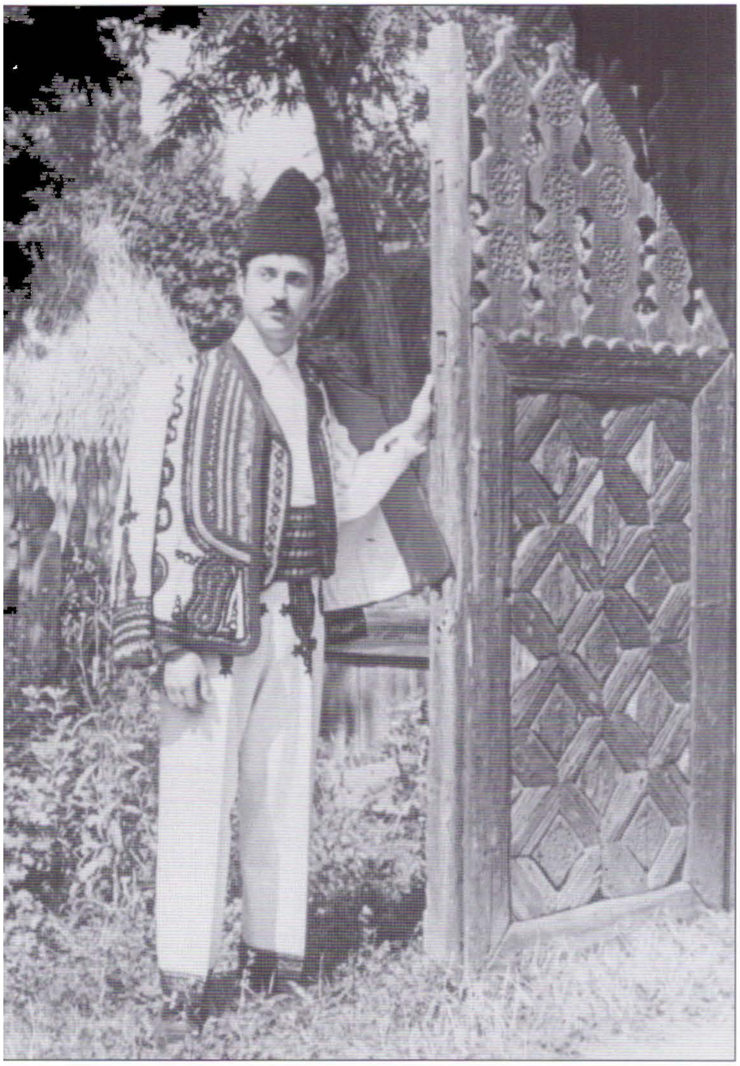
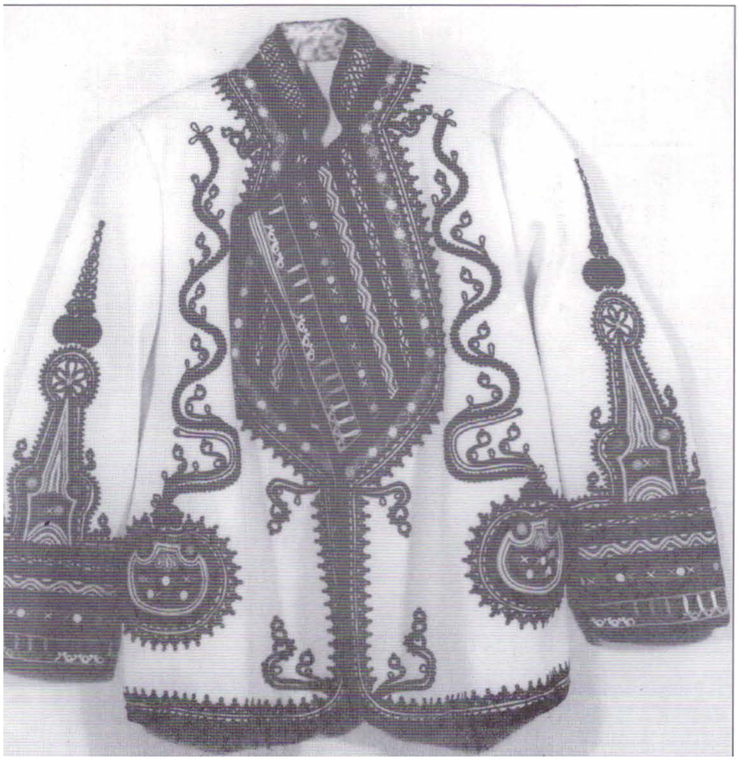
[29] P. Petrescu, *Costumul popular românesc din Transilvania şi Banat* (*The Romanian Folk Costume of Transylvania and Banat*), p. 89.



Costume and ***schiler*** *coat from the Gorj district*



The sleeves of the shirt in Oltenia were either large and loose or tightened by turned up bands or ended by flounces.

Initially, the threads used for decorating the female shirts were of naturally coloured hemp, linen or wool. Then women started to use red and black dyed cotton, home-dyed strawberry-red or sour-cherry-red raw silk, soft wool and industrial cotton thread of various colours. They would also use metallic thread, beads and imported pailletes. The most frequent sewing techniques were: "in flies" (crosses), "in sticks", "behind the needle", "on the inside", "seam" (*în piezuri*), "after the needle" (festoon, chain), "on thread once" etc. A technique of ornamentation that required drawing threads out of the material was the *şabac*. The woven patterns were obtained by using the hand or the technique called *cu speteaza în cocleţi*.

The female shirt is usually monochrome in Oltenia, except for the slight colour shades on the collar and the pleat. The sewn seams that unite the pieces of material and the pleats starting from below the collar or above the cuffs enhance the aesthetic value of the shirt in this area.

The zonal expressiveness and originality of the type of costume with paired *catrinţe* is due to the placing of the ornamental fields, the manner of interpreting and composing the decorative elements, the techniques of decorating and the chromatic structure.

The most frequent ornamental structure of *catrinţă* requires the linear organization of the motives that are oriented in the same direction, on the width (horizontal ranges) or on the length of the material (vertical rows). Both systems of orienting the motives are present on the *catrinţă* in the districts Gorj and Mehedinţi: the front *catrinţă* (locally called *fâstâc*) is narrower that the back one and it is decorated with motives placed on vertical bands while the back *catrinţă* (locally called *opreg*) has a decorative structure composed of horizontal ranges.

There are also examples of the using of the vertical and horizontal orientation of motives even on the same *catrinţă*, in the case of the *catrinţă* (*zăvelcă*) in Vâlcea district that has both ornamental systems sewn on the dark blue or black material, creating an original and unique type of variant.

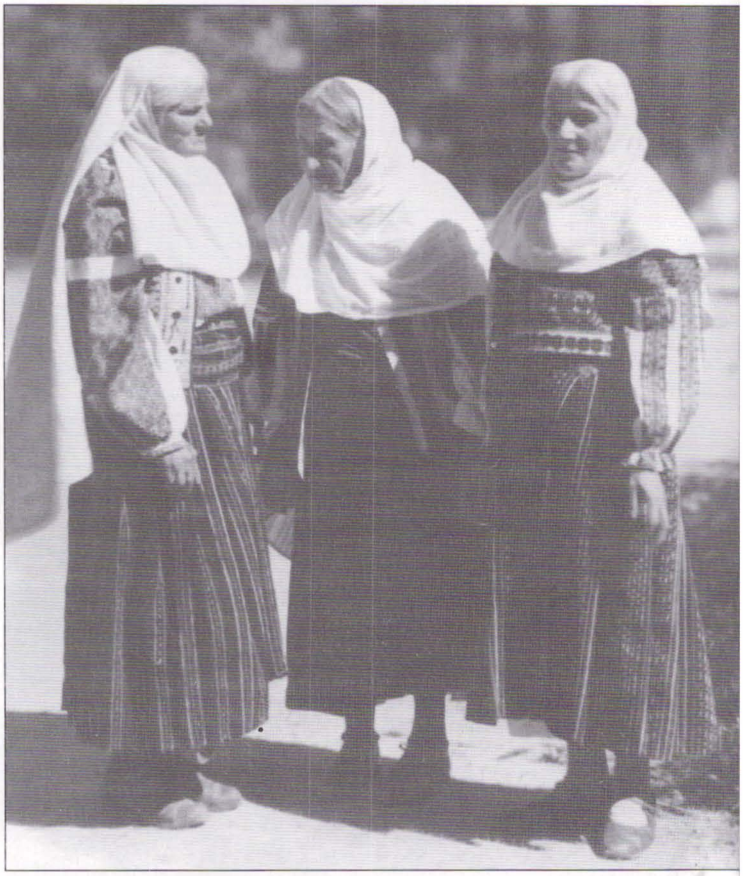
The decorative composition of the front *catrinţă* (called *zăvelcă în pânză*) is structured in two ranges: *the head* (*căpătâi*) and *the upward rows* (*rânde în sus*). The *zăvelcă în pânză* is woven of wool in the technique of the two threads, with a red or black (dark blue) background. On the lower third of the piece the *căpătâi* is placed, consisting of two or three horizontal rows of motives separated and framed in *chenare*.

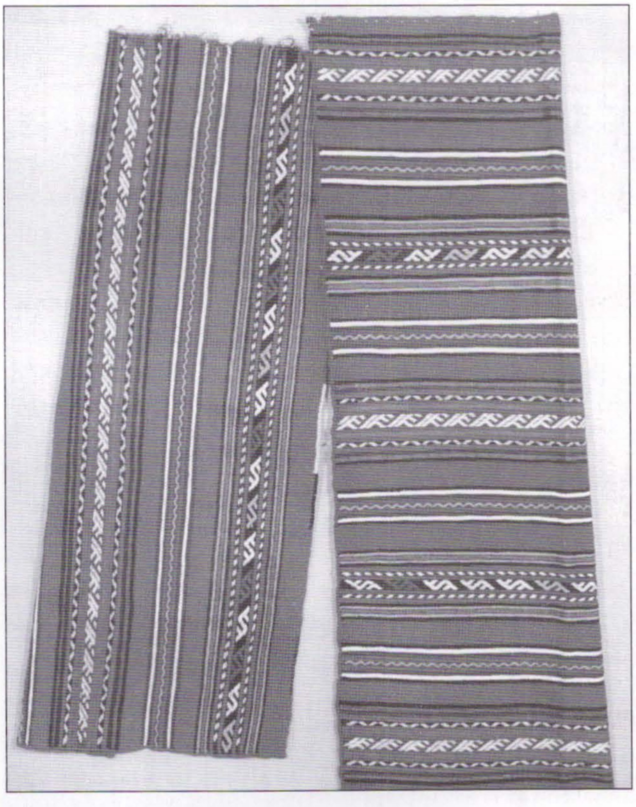
Above the *căpătâi* the vertical rows (*rânde în sus*) are made, displaying alternating motives, among which there are the *curpăn* (*stalk*), *şatrang*, *chenar* (*frame*), *pite* (*loaves of bread*) and *boboci* (*ducklings*). The *catrinţă* with motives sewn with white cotton thread on the dark monochrome background gained in brightness and refinement when women would add to the decoration tinsel (industrial product that penetrated the rural society as early as the second half of the 19th century), coloured beads and metallic sequins.

Zăvelca în pânză (cloth-type) was associated to the *zăvelca în scoarţă* (carpet-type) which was a back *catrinţă* woven entirely of wool, with hidden warp (scarce warp so as the filling could be thickened) and a red background streaked by vertical stripes or by horizontal narrower or wider bands made of polychrome geometrical motives woven "by hand" (in the Karamani technique, without tying the thread).

In the past, young girls and old women would wear only front *zăvelcă*.

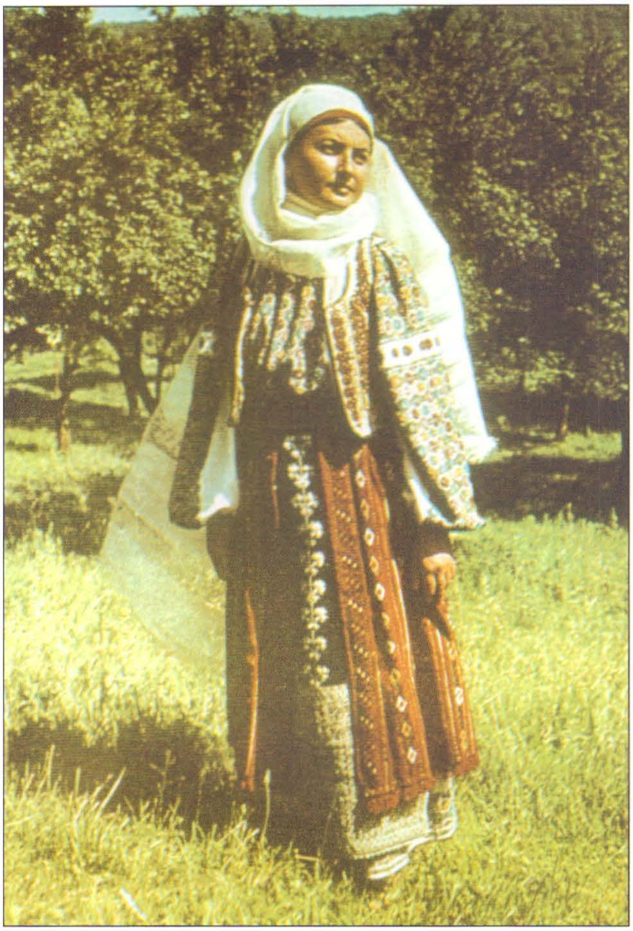
Women in Vâlcea district would wear the paired dark blue tinselled *zăvelcă*, woven of wool in the technique of the two threads. The decoration was woven "by hand", using at first thick hemp thread and later cotton thread, and it consisted of tightly grouped vertical rows, composed of rows of lozenges that were sometimes bordered by a zigzagged pattern. Two frames were placed on the lower part of the piece: one towards the hem and the second approximately at a 20 centimetres distance above the first frame. The background of this *zăvelcă* was black or very dark blue and the woven pattern was light violet-blue. Women would sew golden or silver tinsel between the vertical decorative rows, filling the background.


Old costumes from Vâlcea


Opreg *and* ***fâstâc*** *– types of* ***catrinţe*** *from Gorj*

Another ornamental variant of the *zăvelcă* in the Vâlcea zone was the one with a decorative composition made of compactly and homogeneously spread motives on the entire material.

The ornamental type of *catrinţă* that was frequent in Oltenia is known as *catrinţă* with streaked decoration, consisting of simple or patterned streaks placed in parallel horizontal rows and a pattern of different motives (geometrical, vegetal, bird-shaped, anthropomorphic) concentrated towards the laps of the piece which was called *căpătâi* (head) or *prag* (*threshold*). There are some variants to this type: with the decoration placed in the lower third of the material and consisting of simple, horizontal streaks or patterned streaks alternating with simple streaks or the decoration is composed of patterns placed only on the laps (this variant is frequent in the districts Olt, Dolj and Mehedinţi).



Folk costume with ***vâlnic*** *with* ***zăvelcă*** *"in cloth" (Vâlcea district)*

The *catrinţe* in the Olt district form another type, being called *zăvelci cu betea.* The background is dark blue and it is decorated with meandering or rhomboidal vertical rows patterned in the loom with blue wool or cotton thread and bordered by lines or crosses made with silver thread. Two horizontal rows of ornamentation similar to the vertical ones are woven on the laps of the *zăvelcă* and framed by little crosses made with tinsel.

Another type of *catrinţă* highly appreciated in the rural community was the *vâlnic* with dark red or bright red (*cicic*) background which was woven and patterned in the loom and it was ornamented by vertical bands made of polychrome geometrical motives (lozenges, spirals, hooks) in alternation with thin stripes forming a rhythmic composition. The decoration could sometimes be completed by a patterned border on the laps of the *vâlnic.*

In the past, women would wear the *vâlnic* woven *scorţeşte* (with hidden warp covered by the filling threads) as an independent piece. A girl would wear the *vâlnic* for the first time as a bride at her wedding.

In time, the festive *vâlnic* was associated to a *zăvelcă,* a front *catrinţă* longer than the back *vâlnic* (frequent in the zones Romanaţi, Vâlcea, Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinţi).

Another type of *vâlnic*, specific to a small area at the intersection of the districts Mehedinţi, Gorj and Dolj is the *vâlnic* ornamented with silver tinsel embroidery, which gave it the name of *zăvelcă cu betea* or *crăţ*. This piece – unique in its kind – is ornamented on its lower third by vegetal motives among which the tree of life is central and also by anthropomorphic motives (a round dance) sewn with wool, cotton and wide metallic thread.

The male folk costume was composed of functional but aesthetic pieces, more discreetly ornamented and displaying less colourful compositions that the female costume.

According to the field data, in the past men would wear, irrespective of the season (summer or winter), caps made of sheep or lamb fur. Then they started to wear the wheat, rice or rye straw hats crafted locally or cloth hats bought from the fairs, which were more suited for the summer clothing.

The shape and manner of wearing the cap depended strictly on the age of a man. Young men would wear high pointed caps with the top slanted to one side, drawn to the back or pushed inside while the aged men would wear the bottomed round cap, called *mocănească* (*shepherd*).

Young men would wear narrow rimmed felt hats, while the old men would rather wear hats with wider rims. Large rimmed hats were imported from Austria and small rimmed ones from Czechoslovakia.

In the villages with mixed population – natives and *ungureni* – the common hats coexisted with the hats worn in Sibiu area, which had small, round calottes and narrow rims.

On holidays, young men would adorn their head covers with natural or artificial flowers, peacock feathers and bead bands.

The field material attests (in Gorj, Mehedinţi and Vâlcea districts) an old custom according to which the men who had been born after a dead brother or sister (they were born after *pierit – the passed away one*) had to wear a silver or a gold ring in one of their ears.

The two main types of male shirt – the old straight shirt and the shirt with inset – were also frequent in Oltenia.

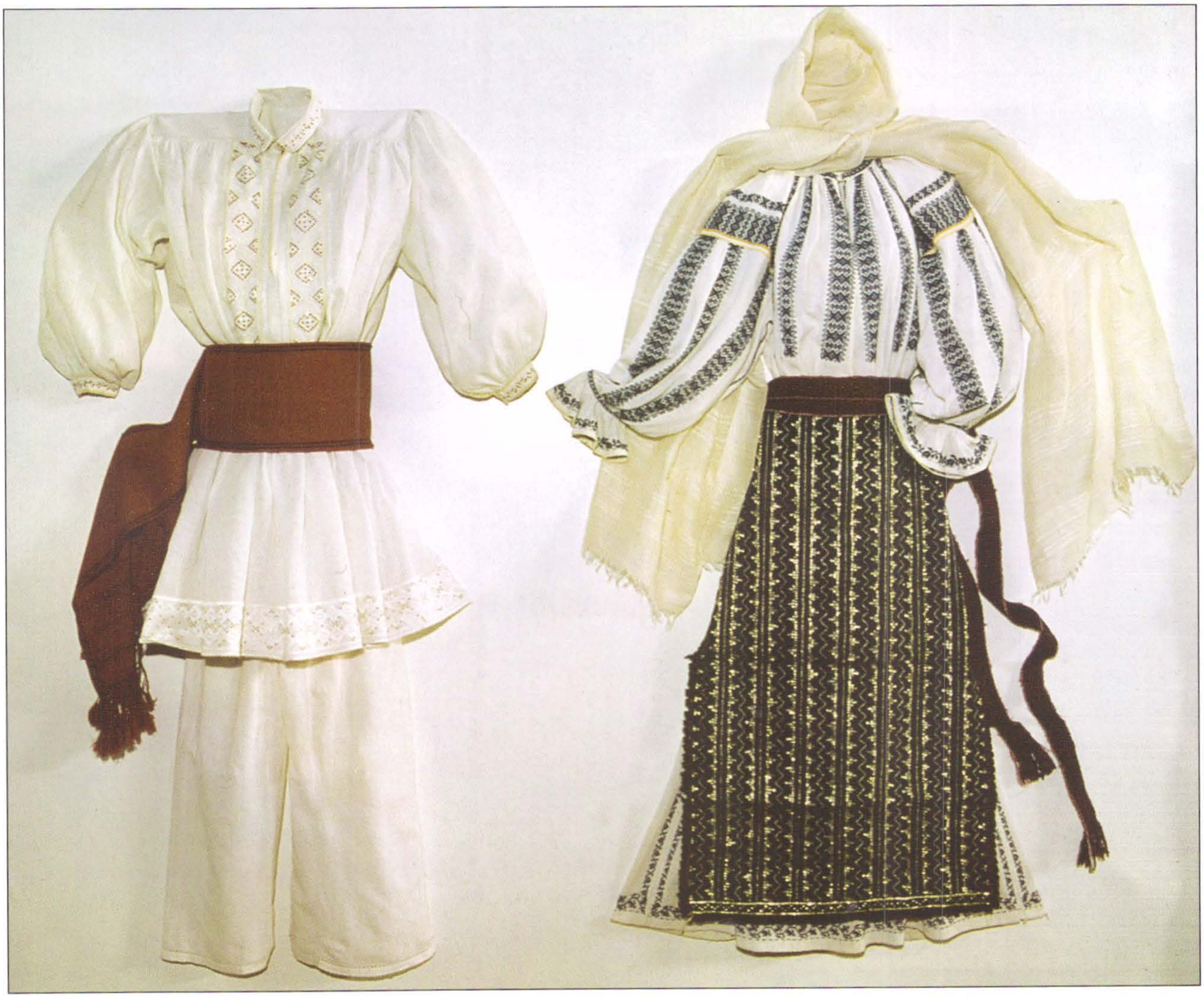
The men in the mountainous areas in the north of the region would wear knee-long shirts of simple, thick cloth while the men in the plain southern areas would wear ankle-long shirts of thin streaked cotton and raw silk cloth. The male shirts had decorations on the collar, along the neck slide, on the breast, on the hems of sleeves and laps. The sleeves were attached to the shoulder cut by sewn patterns (*cheițe*). The breast of the shirt would be ornamented by *şabace* made with white silk thread and framed by a zigzagged lace worked with the needle and later crocheted; the same "corners" would ornament the collar, the neck slide and the hems of the sleeves and laps. Another variant of decoration consisted of rows of geometrical motives and *şabace* on the laps. The decoration of the shirt was entirely white, except for the collar that had a black background *filled* with colours. The decoration with polychrome geometrical motives sewn on the collar and along the neck slide was less frequent.

The girdles had a very important role in the arrangement of the folk costume pieces. Men in Oltenia would wear woven girdles (*brâie* and *bete*), fastening on their shirts with the *brâu* and fixing the richly ornamented *bete* over it. Old men would also wear leather belts (the *chimir* and the *wide belt*). The *brâu* or *chimir* would also serve to support the cloth or leather bags for money, tobacco, tinder and flint and the holiday sewn handkerchiefs or streaked kerchiefs.

The *cioareci* (trousers) made of rough homespun cloth in the north of Oltenia and of homespun cloth with cotton warp in the south have a tight cut in the north and a larger one in the south. The ornamentation is also different in the two geographic areas of the region: the north *cioareci* are decorated with black *bămaş* and with black or blue cord, while the south *cioareci* are white and unornamented, except for the festive pieces in some villages where men would wear *cioareci* of fine special homespun cloth and decorated with strings that would create a *wheel* motive and with coloured cloth applied along the lines of the false pockets (*ghizde*).

The decoration of the summer trousers was spread on the whole material and obtained by a weaving technique (*nevedeală*) or it could be placed on the lower margins and obtained by polychrome sewn patterns, woven patterns or *şabace*. The same piece could be decorated by using different procedures (sewing, weaving and fringes); thus the aesthetic effect would grow.

Traditional costumes from the Olt district



The *opincă* - the local traditional footwear - was associated to homespun cloth leggings. On holidays, women would wear homespun cloth boots ornamented by sewing or floral motives made of cord.

The male and female folk costumes in Oltenia were completed by the winter coats: thick fur coats (breastplates and sheepskin coats) and woollen cloth coats (*şube, giubele, ipingele*) that had local variants determined by their cut and ornamentation system.

The specialized furriers of the villages would decorate the waistcoats and the sheepskin coats with embroideries sewn with polychrome soft wool, dyed cotton and silk thread, with applied pieces of leather (specially processed) on which ornamental motives were sewn and with fur trimmings. There were some famous furrier centres in Oltenia that got to be known in the whole Romanian Plain: the centres of Caracal, Corabia, and Dăbuleni and in the period between the two world wars the centres of Vişina and Vădastra (in the Romanaţi Plain, Olt district).

Waistcoats and sheepskin coats would be crafted for all occasions: work, holidays, family ceremonies.

The festive female sheepskin coats were waist long and sleeveless, flaring because of the gores introduced under the armpits and decorated by a row of polychrome rosettes that bordered the front opening and the laps and by applied cord and leather braided patterns.

The winter festive female sheepskin coats were longer, covering the hips and they were richly ornamented with the famous *cosoaie* (spirals) made with green *irhă* and coloured wool and placed on the shoulders, laps and margins of sleeves.

The sheepskin coat for brides was ample and richly ornamented and only the well-off women would afford to buy one. It had three-quartered sleeves, following the waistline and flaring towards the laps due to the front and back gores. It was ornamented by *cosoaie* placed around the waist, on the shoulders, back, laps and sleeves and by embroideries and black lamb fur trimmings that bordered the front opening and the hems of the sleeves and laps.

The male waistcoats and the bridegroom sheepskin coat would be adorned with the same *cosoaie.*

The fur coats crafted by the furriers in the Romanaţi Plain are among the most accomplished creations of their kind as they display great originality by their elegant cut, the ornamentation techniques, the alternation of white and decorated spaces and the refined range of colours.

The homespun cloth coats would be differently cut in the north and in the south of the region. They were of white cloth and cut in straight sheets with narrow gores in the mountain areas and they were amply flaring in the plain areas.

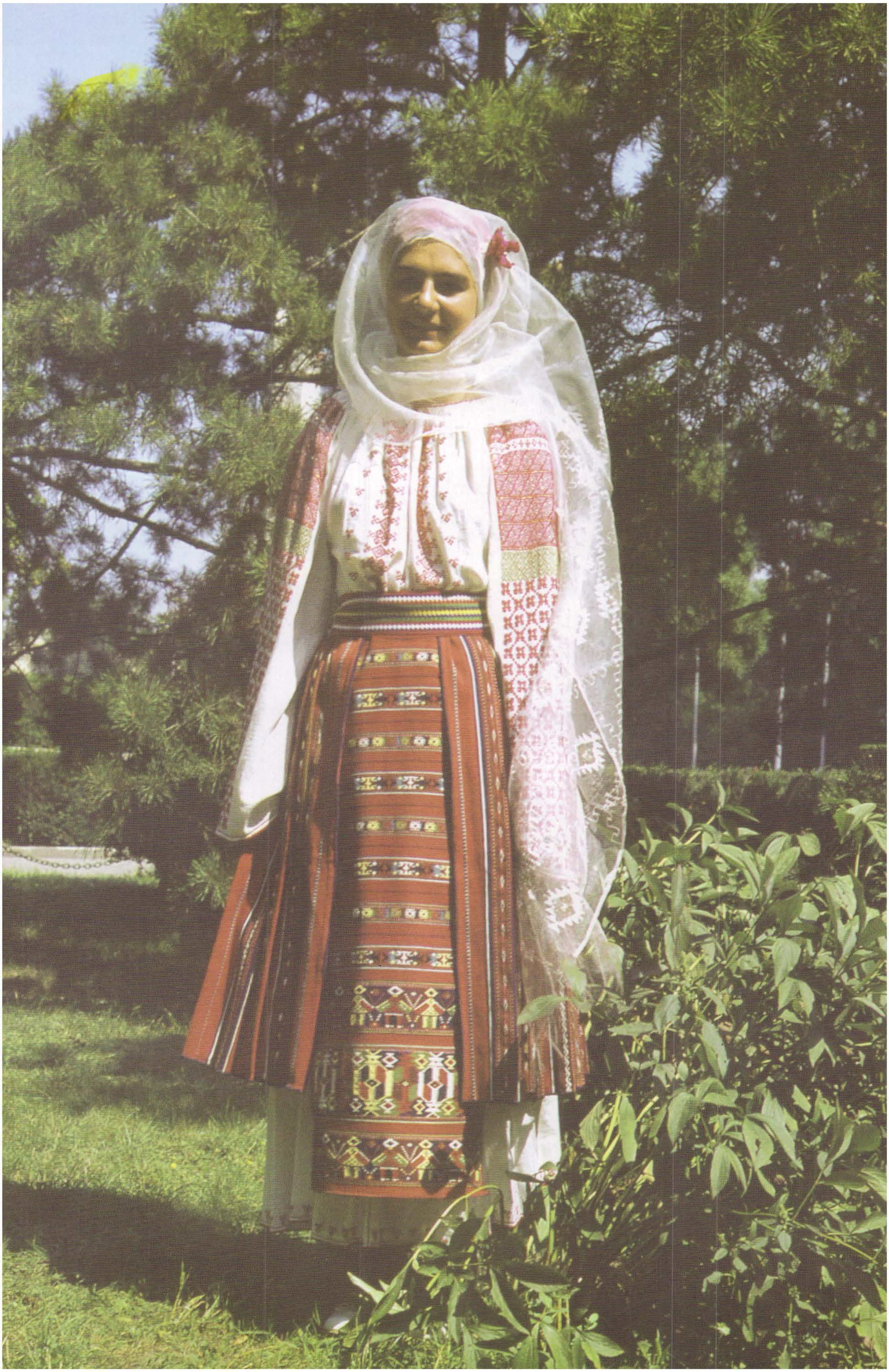
The long white homespun cloth coats with flaring cut due to the lateral gores were usually worn on holidays; they had several variants: the sleeveless *giubea* or *casac* (Olt district), the long sleeved or short sleeved (above the elbow) *şubă* (Dolj district), the latter being worn as a cloak, with the sleeves stitched at the back.

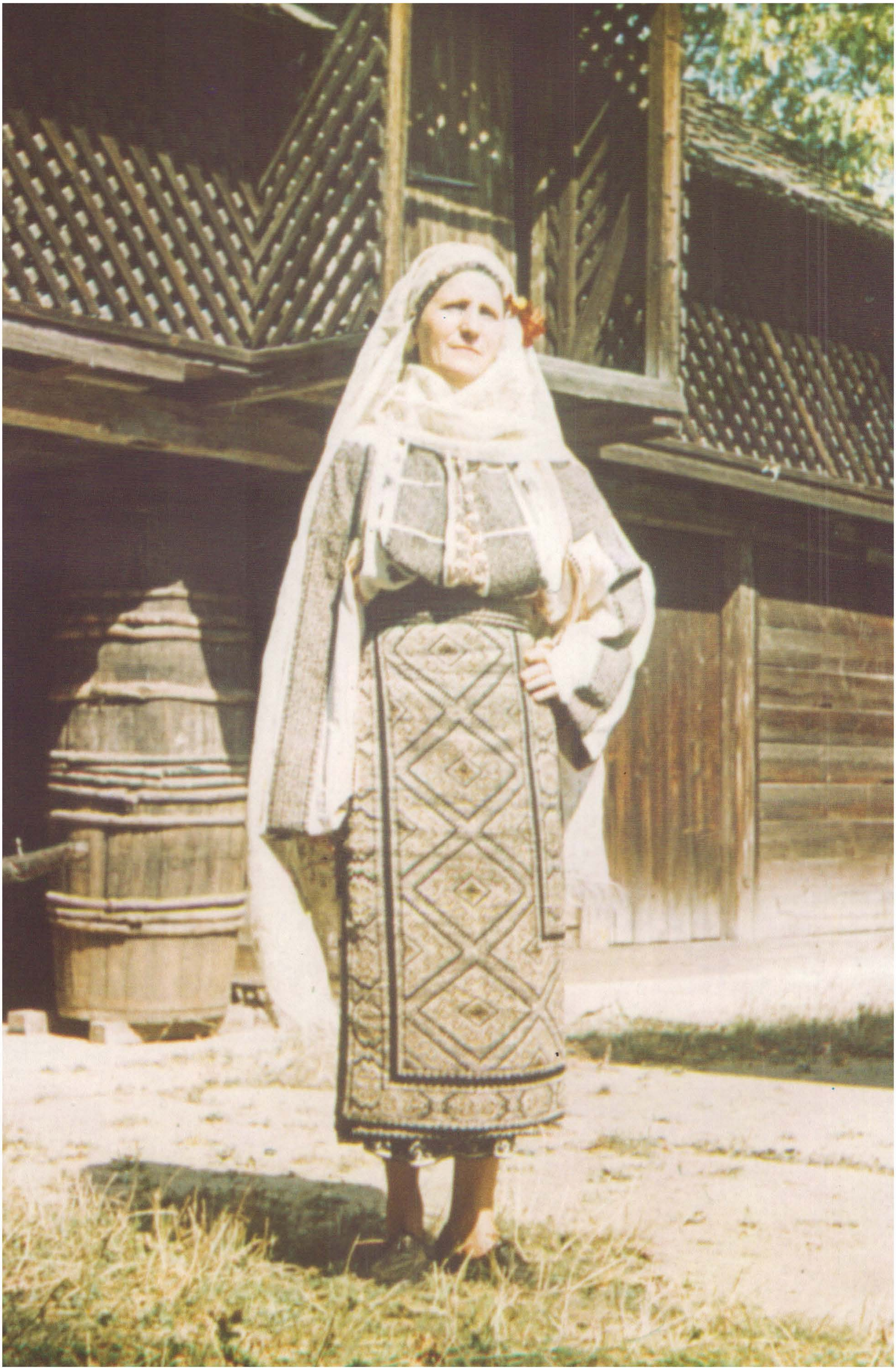
The homespun cloth coats would be decorated by patterns sewn with white or polychrome wool or cotton thread or by applied cord and coloured cloth placed on the collar, breasts, gores, margins of the sleeves and laps.

A specific male coat for the plain areas of Oltenia was the *ipingea* made of black or brown homespun cloth. This type of coat had two variants: the one with sleeves and the sleeveless one that looked like a cloak and was cut of the sheets of material placed on the width, being called *ipingea oarbă* (*blind ipingea*). Both types had large gores flaring visibly towards the laps and a wide collar (*chepeneag* or *gluguş*) that could be raised and buttoned around the face as a hood. The ornaments were home woven cords crocheted and dyed that were applied on the cloth forming linear and floral patterns.

The evolution of the folk costume in Oltenia has been influenced by various local factors that explain both the persistence of the general features of the Romanian folk costume in the Oltenian type and the particulars that shape it as a rich creation, authentic and highly aesthetic.

Traditional Romanaţi costume →





Wallachia

The evolution of the folk costume in Wallachia and especially in the zones Argeş and Muscel has been marked by the influence of the sumptuous medieval costume in use at the royal residences of Câmpulung and Curtea de Argeş that were founded by the first rulers in the dinasty Basarab who were related to the imperial house of Byzantium and founded the principality of Wallachia.

The festive folk costume of the region reflected the brightness and opulence of the silk and purple garments woven with gold and silver threads that nobles and high officials would wear at the royal court or at church.

On the other hand, the population movement in the area recorded the people that settled in Wallachia at the end of the 18th century, coming from a geographic area that included the Jiu Valley, the Vâlsan Valley, the Muscel Hills, the Mărginimea Sibiului and the Cotmeana Platform, up to the middle of the Teleorman district. The new-comers contributed substantially to the development of local folk culture.[30]

The movement of population mentioned above explains the fact that the folk costume in Wallachia is marked by decorative elements and terminology of Sibiu or Vâlcea influence that has been adopted in several stages and has set different fashions regarding the local folk clothing.

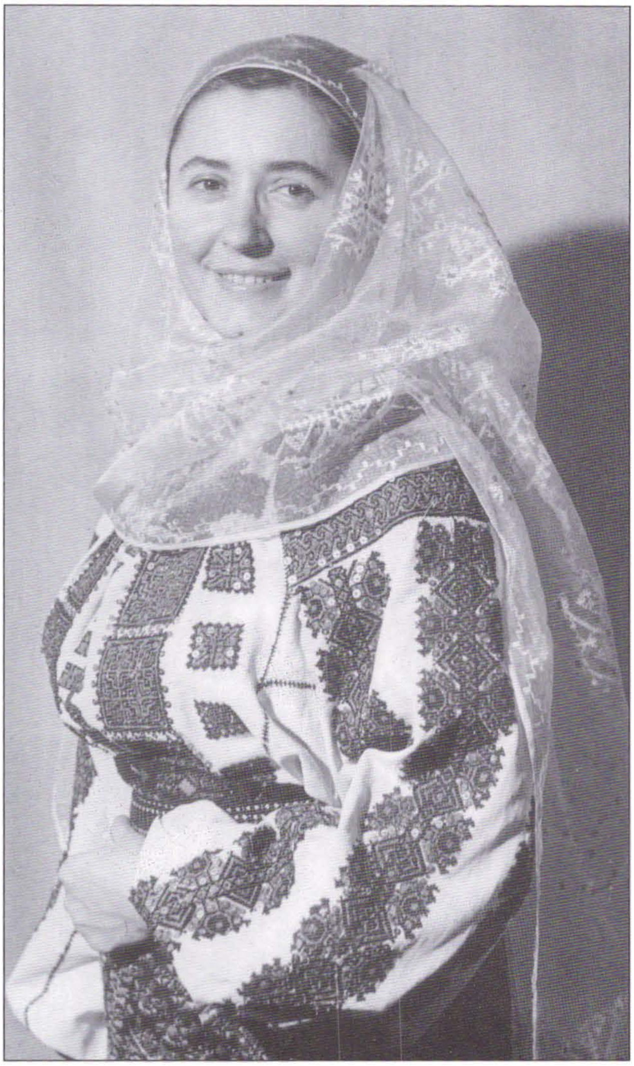
The structure of the folk costume in the region has not been essentially changed by the influences and renewal tendencies exerted upon it in time but the local tradition has been reshaped by successive generations and new decorative elements, techniques and costume pieces added to its variety and plastic value.

The social prestige of the folk costume of Wallachia (and especially of that in the zone Argeş-Muscel), its rich ornamentation, original decorative composition and chromatic harmony have consecrated it as festive garment for ethnographic areas outside Wallachia.

The most valued costume elements of the type Argeş-Muscel are the kerchief (*maramă*), the shirt (*ie*) and the *fotă*, renowned for their rich and original decorative and chromatic composition.

The textile piece that covered the head of women in Argeş was called *maramă* (or *cârpă* locally) and it was woven of cotton and later of raw silk.

The *maramă* had alternate patterned and streaked woven decorations made with cotton or polychrome silk and placed at the two ends of the material. Women would wear only on holidays the transparent thin *maramă* associated to a monochrome kerchief (*tulpănaş*) over which they would fix a *cordea* – a 12-15 centimetres wide ribbon or black velvet band decorated with sewn geometric or floral motives or with applied beads. The velvet *cordea* (called *legătoare* locally) completed the headdress as a diadem over the veil of the *maramă*. The extremely fine quality of the raw silk *maramă* and its discreet and harmonious ornamentation conferred a special elegance to the female costume of Argeş.



Maramă *and* ***ie*** *(folk blouse) – the distinctive elements of the Muscel costume*

← *Traditional Muscel costume*

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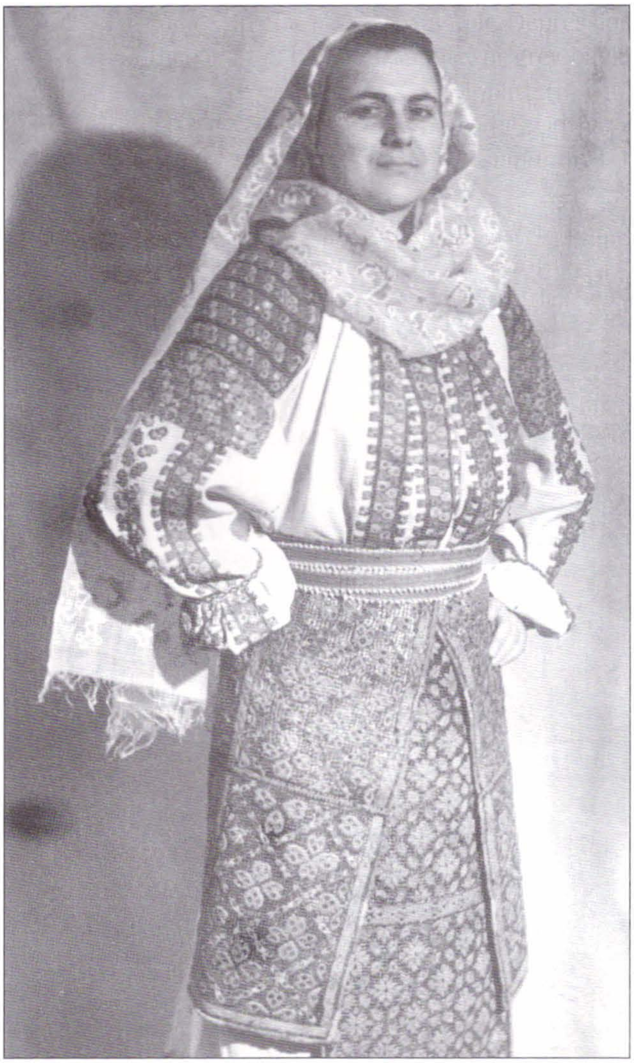
[30] Fl.B. Florescu; P. Stahl; P. Petrescu, *Arta populară din zonele Argeş şi Muscel (Folk Art in the Zones Argeş and Muscel).*



Traditional Argeş costume: ***maramă****. shirt.* ***fotă*** *and* ***catrinţă***

The female shirt (*ie*) in Argeş was ornamented with large square or rhomboidal patterns or with other motives: S-shape, spiral, star or the motive known as the *sheepskin coat girdle* (*brâul cojocului*) and also represented on other costume pieces.

The influence of the Muscel area upon the costume of Argeş was visible at the ornamentation level, in the presence of some motives of Muscel (the so-called *fuşti*, resembling to a leaf rib with oblique branches or the *floare înfundată*, a prominent technique of sewing) on shirts in Argeş. Other elements specific to the Argeş shirt were the polychrome pleating, the dense compact ornamentation sewn on the sleeves (*blană*), which was framed by rows of small leaves, the seams sewn in progressive enlarging of delicate ornaments and the wearing of the sleeves with turned-up cuffs. Each piece was made unique by the skilful sewing techniques employed, the harmonious combinations of colours, the discreet association of the metallic thread, polychrome beads and golden sequins.

The *fotă* of Argeş could be worn either as such or associated with a front *catrinţă*.

In the past, the *fotă* would be woven of monochrome wool (black, dark blue, red) and later of cotton or thin cotton in the technique of the four threads or in the technique of the two threads (less frequent). The *fotă* woven in two threads was called *fotă scorţată* because it had been woven in the same technique as the *scoarţe* (wall-carpets). The ornamentation of the old *fote* preserved in the museum collections framed the material with horizontal rows towards the laps and vertical bands on the lateral sides. If the decorative elements were placed only on the laps the piece was called *fotă cu ghenar* (*with frame*) and if the piece had also the vertical bands it was known as *fotă cu ghenar încheiat* (*with closed frame*). Geometrical ornaments (star, lozenge, square) would be sewn with coloured soft wool on the monochrome background of the *fotă* by using various artistic sewing techniques.

The decoration evolved in time and the patterned woven ornament got to cover larger portions of the material, only a small space on the back *fotă* remaining unornamented.

The two lateral margins of the *fotă* would be frequently decorated with different patterns: one of them would be streaked with vertical polychrome stripes and the other would be woven with a pattern. The inventive Romanian peasant woman would overlap the two sides so as the more ornamented part would be visible on holidays and the streaked part would be on the outside on working days.

The *fotă* with woven patterning made with golden and silver metallic thread was adopted in the Argeş zone beginning with 1900, the spreading of this ornamentation style of Muscel influence marking a new stage in the evolution of the folk costume of Argeş. The women from Câmpulung Muscel would sell at the fair in Piteşti a series of household-made textile products: raw silk *marame*, shirts, *fote*, and black velvet vests with floral ornaments sewn with tinsel. They created a fashion trend that was very popular, so as the tinsel ornamented *fotă* (named *vâlnic* locally) became an obligatory piece for the dowry of girls and then women of all ages started to wear such *fote*.

In the Argeş zone, the *fotă* was also worn associated to a front *catrinţă* known as *zăvelcă*.

The small-size *fotă* would be tightly wrapped around the body and it remained slightly open in the front where the *zăvelcă* covered it. The woven patterns formed horizontal rows on the laps and vertical bands on the sides, while the background material was red.

The *zăvelcă* was remarkably monochrome, usually cherry-red like the *fotă* and richly ornamented with geometrical, floral or anthropomorphic (of Oltenia influence) motives, which were placed on the lower half of the material and grouped in horizontal bands or spread on the whole ornamental field. The golden sequins and polychrome beads applied on the *zăvelcă* brightened up its decoration.

The small-size *fotă* and the *catrinţă* of Argeş had sewn and not woven decoration and abounded in metallic thread of oriental origin that had been transmitted to the folk costume from church or noble court workshops. Further decorations were tinsel, sequins and beads that formed the filling of the pattern or decorative composition. All that ornamental structure combined with the dominant red nuances and the delicate shirt would make this type of Argeş costume an example of sumptuousness and refinement.

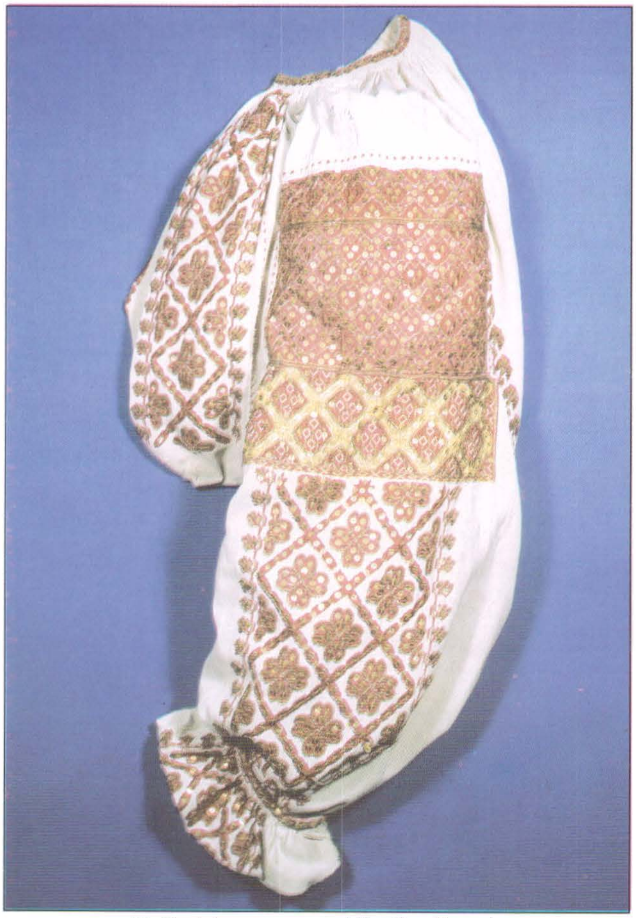
Women in Argeş zone would also wear frequently the type of costume with paired *catrinţe*, especially the ornamental variant of *catrinţe* with streaked decoration (simple or patterned woven streaks placed in parallel horizontal rows) and another field concentrated towards the laps (*căpătâi* or *prag* – head or threshold) and consisting of geometrical, anthropomorphic, bird-shaped or vegetal motives.

Another frequent decorative variant was the *catrinţă* with the ornamental composition placed in the lower third of the piece and made of simple horizontal streaks, simple streaks alternating with patterned ones or just patterned streaks.

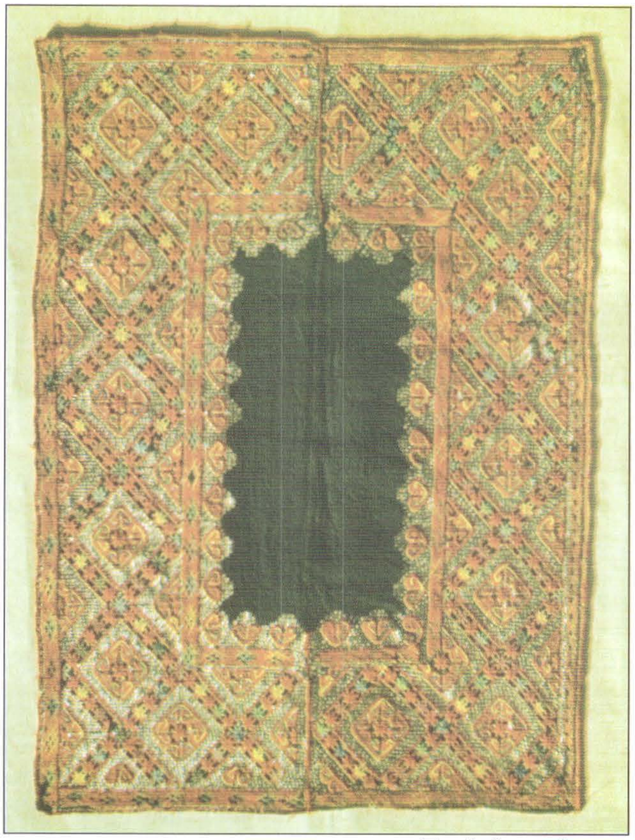
There was still another variant with compactly and homogeneously spread motives all over the material.

Different techniques of patterning were used for decorating the same *catrinţă*: by hand or by a loom piece called *spetează*. The patterns were made with wool, soft wool, cotton, silk thread and tinsel to which sequins and beads were added.

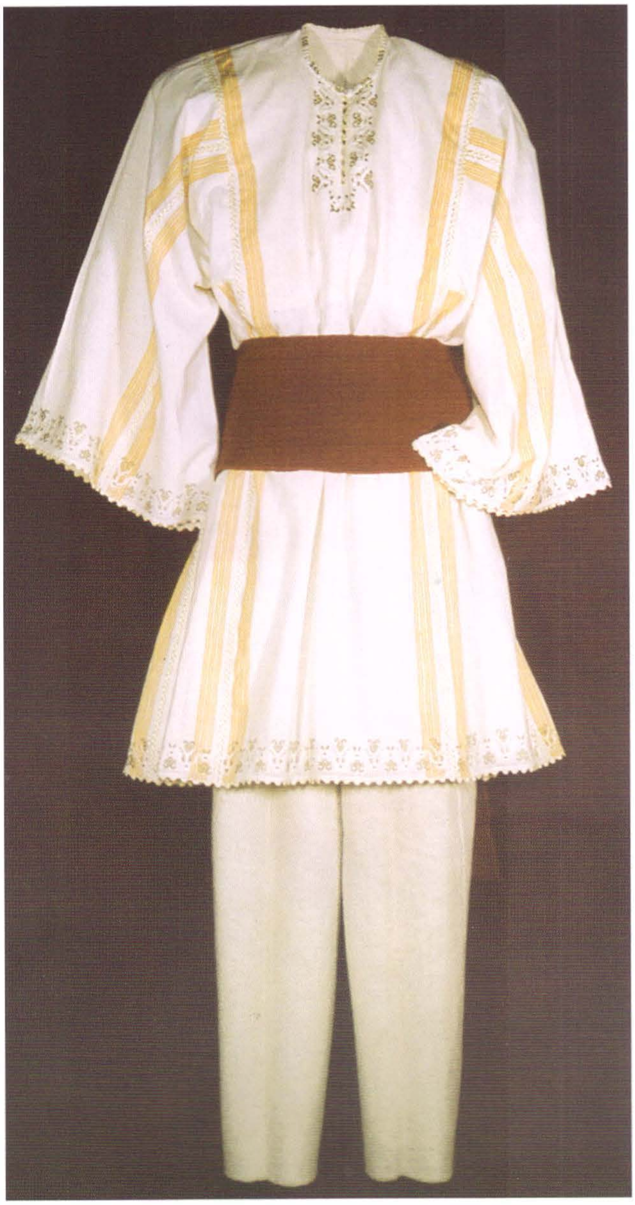
Nevertheless, the costume that captured the public attention and gained the love of beauty admirers was the folk costume of Muscel, which so many Romanian and foreign painters (N. Grigorescu, Gh. Tattarescu, Carol Popp of Szathmary, Michel Bouquet etc.) represented in their creations.



Folk blouse specific for the Argeş zone



Fotă from Argeş



Male folk costume from Argeş

All the component pieces of the Muscel costume combined to create an extremely spectacular attire, beginning with the raw silk *maramă*, a 4-metre long thin veil richly decorated all over its surface or only towards the ends with polychrome geometric or floral ornaments sewn with cotton, silk or golden and silver threads that formed rhomboidal patterns.

The shirt of Muscel, called *ie* (that included also the laps) was made of woven cloth with small yellow stripes on the margins and it was characterized by extremely long sleeves that would twist with wearing and by an opulent decoration with a series of original elements among which the frequently mentioned *fuşti* or *fuşte* that resembled the rib and branches of a leaf. This motive was sewn with red, black and tinsel thread and it was placed on the sleeves and of the breast, creating a remarkable plastic effect.

Other ornamental motives that enhanced the value of the Muscel *ie* were *stâlpi* (pillars), *ciarbă*, *curcani* (turkeys), *şerpească* (snake-shape), *melci* (snails) etc., which were sewn with different techniques and mostly with the so-called *old point* (or *fat point*) that created a prominent embroidery.

Another component piece of the female costume that added to the fame of the Muscel costume was the *fotă* composed of two horizontally sewn black, blue, red or white sheets, simply ornamented with bordering streaks before 1880 and after that date with geometrical motives patterned by hand in the loom.

The background of the *fotă* on the laps and often on the waist appears as an approximately 15 centimetres wide dark red band called *mânz* (foal) or *bantă*.

After 1900 the *fotă* of Muscel was more amply decorated all over the lateral parts and later even the lap streak would be patterned and became a wide decorative rim.

The white *fotă* patterned with tinsel all over its surface became part of the ceremonial bride costume and would be an obligatory piece in every girl's dowry.

The *fotă* of Muscel entered the commercial circuit of country fairs because of its rich ornamentation with silk and gold and silver metallic thread. Women in other ethnographic zones adopted it (including zones in Moldavia on the left bank of the river Prut) and this *fotă* of Muscel became an ethnic mark and a part of the so-called "Romanian national costume".

The male folk costume of the zones Argeş and Muscel was characterized by a simple structural line, balanced ornamentation and highly refined colour range, all these features giving it a special elegance.

The most frequent types of shirts were the old shirt with gores, decorated with patterns sewn with wool, dyed cotton and metallic thread and placed on the collar, to the ends of the sleeves, along the neck slide and on the laps; and the shirt with skirt (the so-called *fustanelă* of the north of Danube) spread along the whole range of the Carpathians, from the Danube to the north of Moldavia.

The different patterns on the seams and white *şabace*, the woven streaks of the material (at the shirt of Muscel) and the discreet ornamentation with metallic thread compose the decorative system of the male shirt.

The white homespun cloth *cioareci* were the next basic piece of the male costume. They were simple or ornamented with cord *găitan* over the *ghizde* (false pockets). Men wore also waist long black homespun cloth vests with collars, buttoned with two rows of buttons. In the summer, they would put on white cotton trousers woven in the technique of the four threads *in loops* (lozenges).

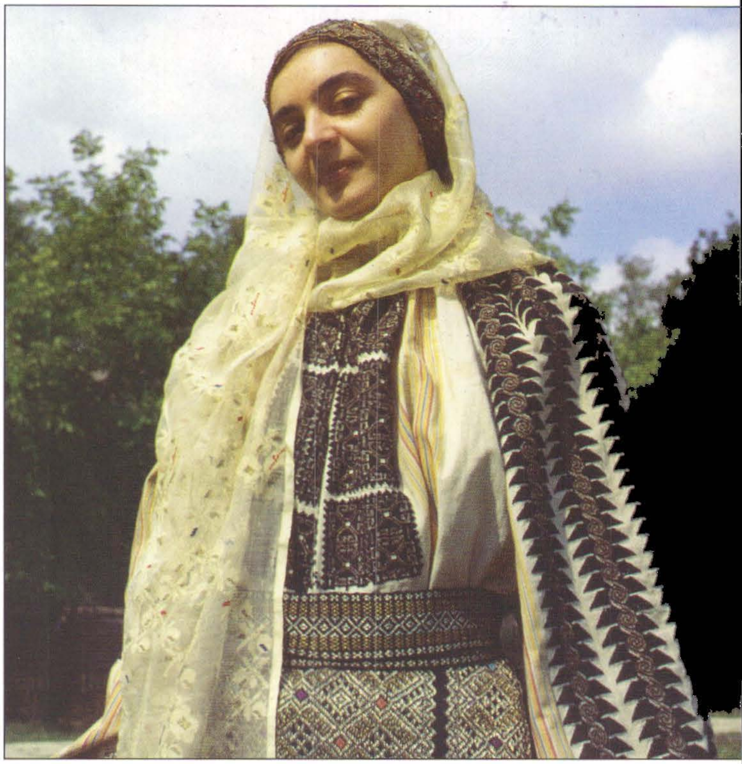
The system of ornamentation of the waistcoats and the sheepskin coats would reflect the influence of the similar pieces across the Carpathians (of the zones Avrig or Făgăraş). Other winter coats were the homespun cloth overcoats: the *mintean*, the *zeghe* decorated with cord or with floral patterns sewn with white wool or thread, the mantle and the hood.

The folk costume in Prahova district is atypical in the repertory of the costume of Wallachia as it has large pleated *fotă*.

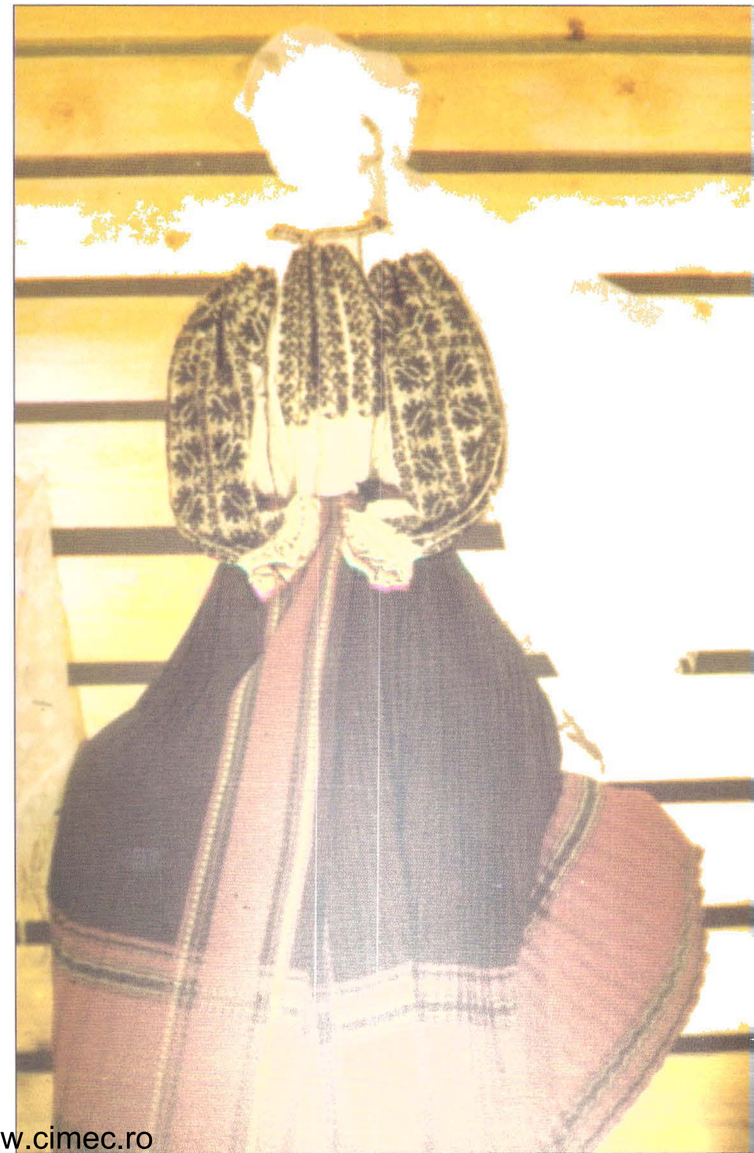
Initially, the female shirt in this area was also different from the types of shirts in Wallachia (decorated with the three ranges: *altiţă*, *încreţ-crease* and *râuri-streams)* as its sleeves were covered with decoration of Transylvanian influence: two horizontal bands, one wider in the upper part (*stream over the shoulder*) and the other narrower by the elbow (*stream over the elbow*) sewn according to an old technique ("curly"). Another decorative element of Transylvanian influence was the *bracelet below obinzică* – a sewn pattern made with the technique *warped on the pleats* and placed below the collar. The most recent type of folk shirt in Prahova adopted the system of ornamentation with *altiţă*, sewn with red and black dyed cotton thread and further adorned with sequins.

The *fotă* looked like a creased or pleated shirt, it was woven in wool processed at the fulling mill in the technique of the four threads and it was composed of two sheets of material united on the middle by an artistic seam. Initially, the *fotă* was simple, with a dark blue or black background. Then the initial type evolved into a more delicate one and women started to wear *fote* woven in the technique of the two threads and decorated with a red, green or yellow streak on the laps.

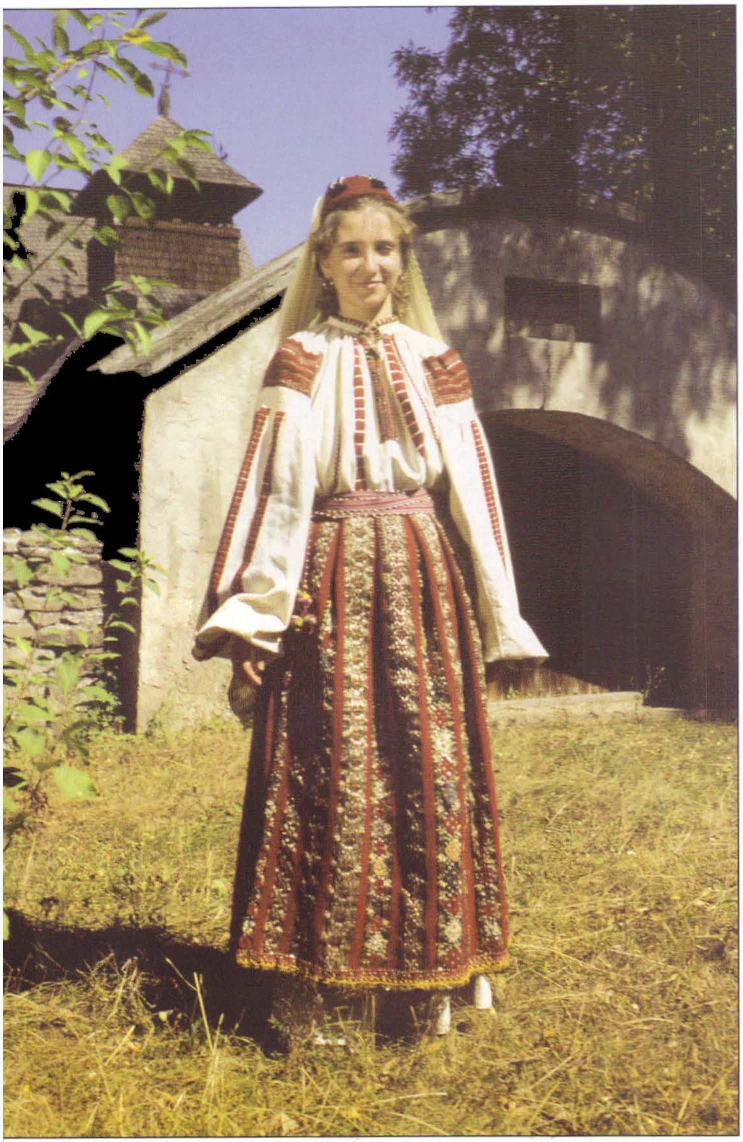
In time, the decoration became richer and it was spread towards the upper parts of the piece. The side ends of the *fotă* of Prahova were ornamented by woven or patterned vertical bands on red background. The composition of the lap ornament was a coloured wide



Maramă *and folk blouse with* ***fuşti*** *from Muscel*



Maramă*, folk blouse and* ***fotă*** *from Prahova*



Traditional Râmnicu Sărat costume: fez, ***maramă****, shirt and* ***fotă***

streak framed by a few thin stripes, called *toiege* (*sticks*) or a suite of small streaks that covered the same space as the wide streak. The golden or silver thread (called *tel*) was another frequent decorative element of the *fotă* of Prahova.

The pleated *fotă* coexisted with the classic, straight one in the Prahova zone.

The costume in Buzău[31] and especially that of a smaller area of Buzău, called Râmnicu Sărat is an original type of the costume in Wallachia. It is composed of a red fez, a shirt pleated around the neck (sewn with an old technique with household dyed wool or cotton) and of a *fotă*, unique due to the arrangement of the decorations on the red background and the use of the polychrome wool and the bright metallic thread inserted among the woven or sewn patterns that adorn the extremities and the lap at the back of the piece.

The characteristic pieces of the male folk costume of Buzău were the old straight shirt or the short shirt with *fustanelă* (kilt) ornamented by white embroideries and fastened up by a wide red woollen girdle (adorned by brightly coloured patterns made with wool, soft wool and tinsel), the white homespun cloth tight *cioareci* and the summer trousers.

The vest, the short black or brown homespun cloth coats, the waistcoats and the sheepskin coats made by local craftsmen completed the male costume, adding to its sobriety, duration and refinement.

Another type of the costume of Wallachia is the costume of Teleorman, characterized by original and notable decorative motives.

The analysis of the components of the Teleorman costume points out a unitary clothing system determined by the way of life of the inhabitants or this area, by their main occupation, geographic, historic and social conditions.

The intense commercial exchanges in the area have always implied the existence of cultural exchanges. The shepherds brought costume pieces, decorative elements and techniques that influenced the local clothing to a certain extent. The connections to other areas and the influence of the sumptuous Romanaţi costume should be also taken into consideration. At the same time, the four towns in the Teleorman district – Roşiori, Alexandria, Turnu Măgurele, Zimnicea – with their numerous craftsmen workshops exerted a certain attraction upon the rural fashion, influencing the cut and providing villages with various types of fabric, velvet, cloth or lace. The intense trade practiced by the *marghidani* (salesmen) lead to the general use of coloured dyed cotton, sequins and beads for enriching the decoration and chromatics of the local folk costume.

The costume in the south of the Teleorman area was influenced by the oriental-Balkan costume worn by the inhabitants of the Turkish outposts along the Danube. The fez, the *mecheleţ*, the gold coin jewels (*icuşari, mahmudele*), the passement, the cut of the large-bottomed trousers and the *zăbun* are evidence of the oriental-Balkan influence.[32]

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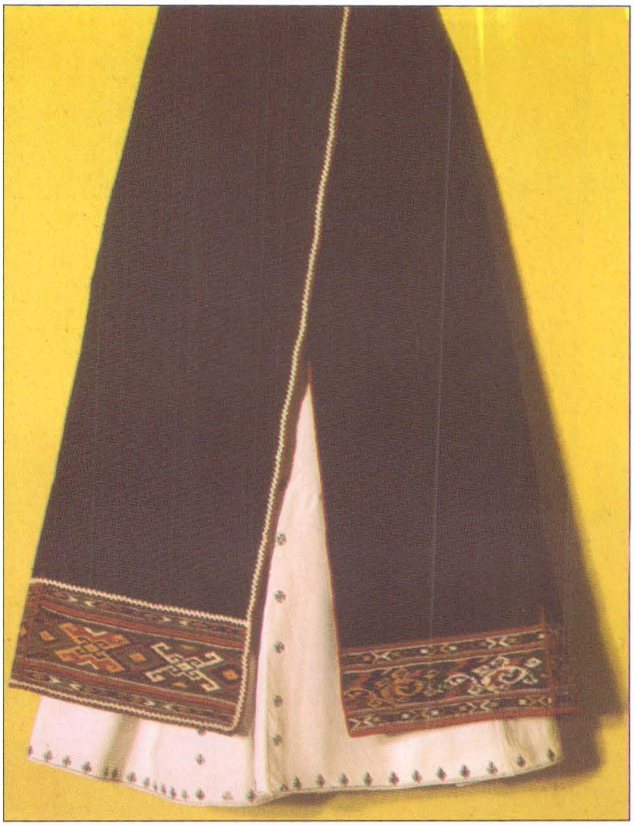
[31] Olga Horşia, *Zona etnografică Buzău* (*The Buzău Ethnographic Zone*).

[32] Maria Cioară-Bâtcă; Vlad Bâtcă, *Zona etnografică Teleorman* (*The Teleorman Ethnographic Zone*).



Old ***boscele*** *from Teleorman*

The component pieces of the women's costume in Teleorman were the head kerchief, the shirt pleated around the neck, the straight (*zoroclie*) shirt and the two paired *catrinţe*.

By 1900, aged women would still wear the headdress *with horns* (lateral prominences made of two plaits that are twisted above the ears as buns and fixed with hairpins) and a headdress support known all over the area as *conci* (*mercheleaţă* in Pietroşani, *mercheleţ* or *chermeleţ* in Zimnicea and Smârdioasa, *chenci* or *checi* in Ţigăneşti). The *conci* could be made of cloth, apple or mulberry stick, vine stem, thick hemp thread etc. and it was covered by different textile pieces, having the practical role of fixing and raising the hairdo and conferring a majestic air to the women who wore it.

Women would better fix their hairdo by covering the *conci with* annex pieces called *bariş, ciumber, dirmea* and over them they would wear a head kerchief (*ştergar, maramă, tulpan, basma*).

On holidays, women would wear the *tulpan* (ornamented with *bagadele* and polychrome beads) as such or associated with the head kerchief (*ştergar*) that reached remarkable artistic value in Teleorman by the exquisite techniques of ornamentation, by the variety of decorative motives and colour nuances.

The characteristic ornamentation of the head kerchief of Teleorman (called *cârpă – cloth* locally) is the woven streaked pattern obtained by inserting thicker white cotton threads intercalated with yellowish raw silk threads in the vertical warp or by using the filling threads to make horizontal streaks, at first white and then coloured (blue or yellow), placed all over the texture or just at its margins with the remaining surface decorated by sewing (needle-made lace) and by tinsel.

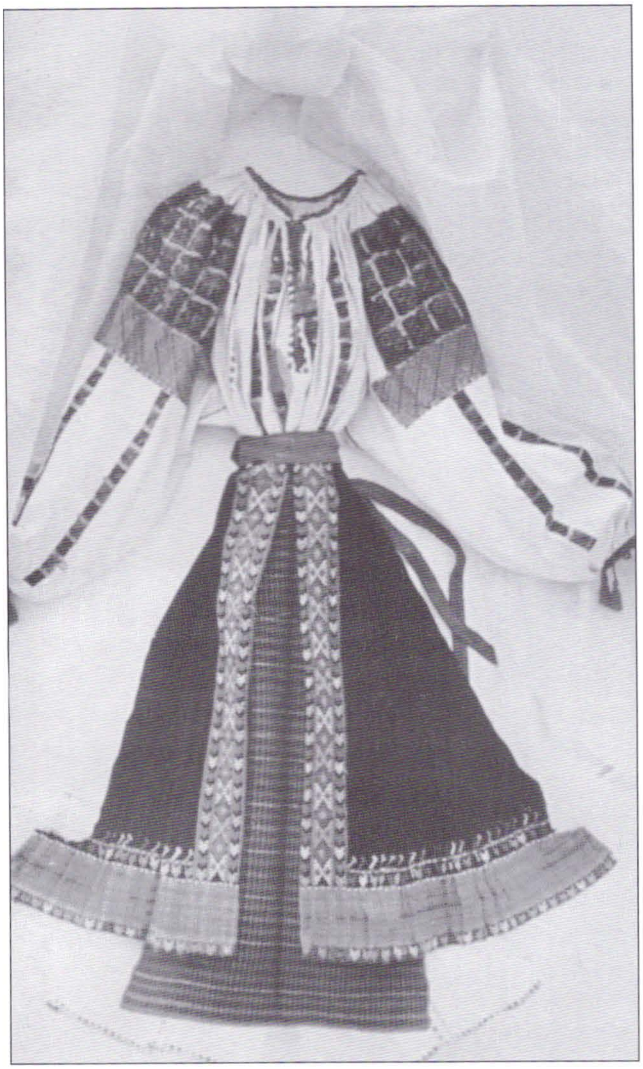
In time, the ornamentation of the head kerchief added to its repertory rows of intercalated drawn out threads and woven patterns at the margins. These drawn out threads and patterns formed isolated motives or compact rows in the spaces between the streaks. The woven patterns – geometrical, vegetal and bird-shaped motives – alternated with the groups of simple streaks and they were made by using a loom piece (*spetează*) with silk or white thin thread and later with dyed or twisted cotton or with mercerized cotton and polychrome woollen threads.

The head kerchief of Teleorman was characterized by its large dimensions: 350 centimetres long, 80 centimetres wide and the length of the patterned end of 75 centimetres.

All over Wallachia, women would fix their head kerchiefs to the temples by hairpins (*spelci*) with coloured nails, which could form (in Teleorman) a continuous row above the forehead, which served as decoration. A black ribbon with gold coins (*icuşari*) sewn on it would be worn across the forehead, under the head kerchief.

Women of all ages would wear coloured glass and stone beads but girls and young married women would also wear golden necklaces with a number of rows that indicated their material status. The necklace of coins (*mahmudele*) would be made of one to four big gold coins sewn on the middle of a black ribbon or strung on a chain and small gold coins (*icuşari*) on the sides. The earrings were made of gold *icuşari*, rings or beads. Girls would also wear aluminum, copper or bone bracelets or bracelets made of small beads strung on a cord and on their fingers they would wear rings made of gold, silver, copper or other metals.

From the morphologic point of view, the women's shirts in the area are part of the Carpathian type, being known locally as *shepherd* shirt or of the *poncho* type with the sleeves attached to the shoulder lines (*zoroclie* shirt).



Folk costume from Vlaşca:
maramă**, shirt, **peşteman** and **boscea

The shirt pleated around the neck with the sleeves ornamented with the three traditional decoration ranges (*altiţă, încreţ, râuri*) was characterized by the square portioning of the motives that formed the *altiţă* that was a typical feature of the female shirt in the zone Vlaşca. The decoration of the shirt was woven or it was sewn "by one thread", "by several threads", "in points", "in flies", "in seam", "on the inside", "in *şabac*".

The straight shirt *zoroclie* for holidays was decorated by motives sewn with white silk, using the technique „by one thread", around the neck, on the breast, along the shoulder lines, on the ends of sleeves and on the laps.

Women would fasten on their shirts with red woollen girdles woven in the technique of the four threads and ornamented with horizontal streaks alternating with patterns woven by hand and called *răsucituri* (twists), *şerpi* (snakes), *gura păpuşii* (the doll's mouth), *peştişorul* (the little fish). A golden or silver thread would be inserted sometimes among the patterns, similarly to the girdles in Banat.

A variant would be the girdles woven in the technique of the four threads and ornamented with loops made in the loom. The female girdle could also be woven in two threads in the technique called *scos* (hidden warp and very dense filling). The girdles were red or black, decorated by horizontal white, red, black, green, yellow or blue streaks and ended by tassels. Women would wear narrower and longer girdles (*bete*) over the wider girdles (*brâie*). The *bete* – 2 centimetres narrow – were made of wool or of woollen warp and cotton filling, woven in the technique of the two threads, patterned in *loops* or *grains* and ended with 15-centimetres long tassels that would hang down one hip.

The *catrinţă*, locally known as *zuvelcă* or *boscea*, would be made entirely of wool, of raw silk warp and woollen filling or of hemp warp and woollen filling. The holiday *boscea* would be woven in the technique of the two threads, in the manner with hidden warp and dense filling (*scos*). The old *boscele* (with twisted cotton warp and thinly spun wool filling) were made of two sheets sewn together on the length.

The old women would wear *boscele* ornamented in the lower half by three narrow streaks separated by two rows of patterns woven with the loom piece called *spetează*. The whole decorative composition was named *prag* (*threshold*). The background of the material was black or blue and the margins of the *boscea* were festooned by needle with red or blue wool.

Young women would wear *boscele* with red (*nărânzat*) background, ornamented by woven horizontal streaks or by alternating wide and narrow streaks separated by patterned geometric and vegetal motives. The anthropomorphic, vegetal or bird-shaped motives that appeared on the laps were compactly grouped in a *prag* (threshold).

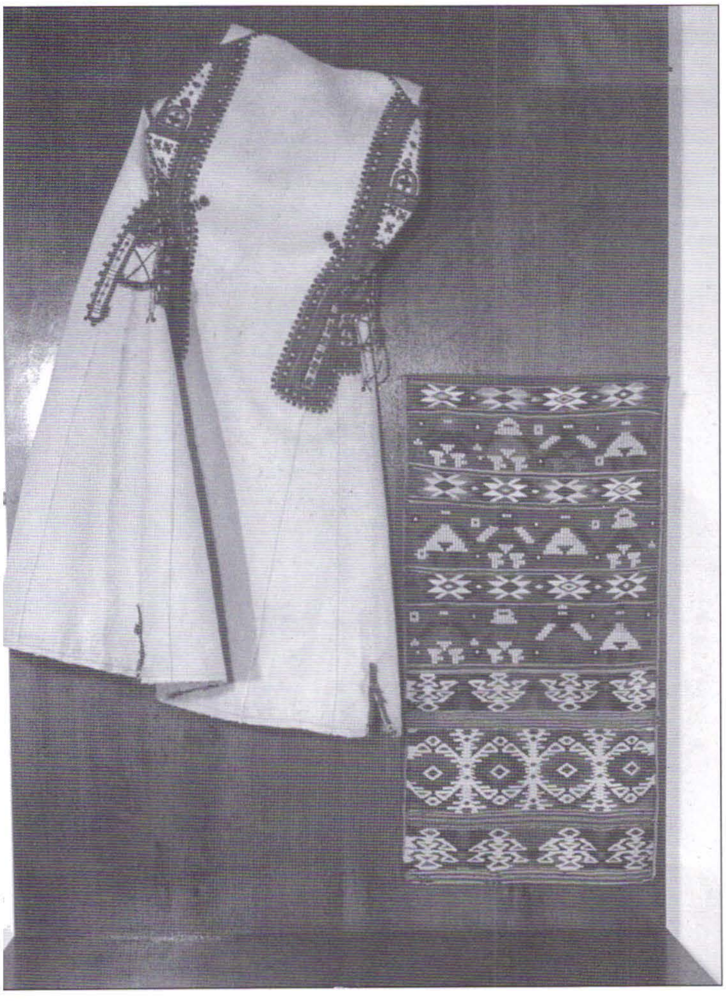
The *boscele* were fastened on by woollen or white, black or yellow cotton *băieri*. The pattern was *broken* on some spaces, it was not continuous. The patterning techniques were remarkably varied: "on the outside", "on the *rost*", "in *spetează*" and woven with wool or polychrome soft wool bought from the salesmen (*marghidani*). The *boscea* patterned on its entire surface would be worn only at the back and it was bor-

Old Vlaşca shirt →

dered by red and blue tassels. Further ornamentations of *boscele* were the sequins (for young women) and the beads (for old women).

Initially, the boscele were worn in pairs, and then the back piece was worn in pair with a front *zuvelcă* ornamented by horizontal streaks that were woven with the loom piece *speteaza* on the laps, forming the special pattern called *prag* (threshold). In a few villages (Slobozia Mândra, Uda-Clocociov, Traian) the back *boscea* was associated to a front *catrință* (locally called *presteleancă*) made of two sheets sewn on the width and decorated by simple or patterned vertical bands and by the *threshold* on the laps.

On cold weather women would wear the *cojochiță* – a sleeveless short waistcoat with front opening and ornamented with vegetal motives sewn with polychrome soft wool and with coloured leather strands on the breast, back and pockets. They would also wear waist long sheepskin coats with floral ornaments made with black cord on the sleeves.



***Giubea** and **boscea** from Teleorman*

The most usual winter coat was the *pleated* sheepskin coat with as much as 12 gores that brides had to wear compulsorily. This coat was covering the knees, tight on the waist and decorated by vegetal motives and *ihră* (white leather strands on which craftsmen would sew *flowers* with coloured soft wool and would frame them in braided green *ihră* ornaments). The sheepskin coat was bordered with black lamb fur trimmings on the collar, margins and sleeves.

Besides the products of the local centres, pieces made in the area Câmpia Romanaților, especially in the famous centre of Corabia (where waistcoats and sheepskin coats with *cosoaie* – spirals of green *ihră* and polychrome soft wool) also circulated in Wallachia.

Women in the area gave up wearing waistcoats and ornamented sheepskin coats earlier, replacing them by products of the textile industry, like the *scurteici* and *cațaveici* (overcoats of general use) and also *zăbune*.

In the cold season women would also wear hip-long white thickened cloth coats named *șube*, which were ornamented by wool cords. This type of coat went out of use after the First World War.

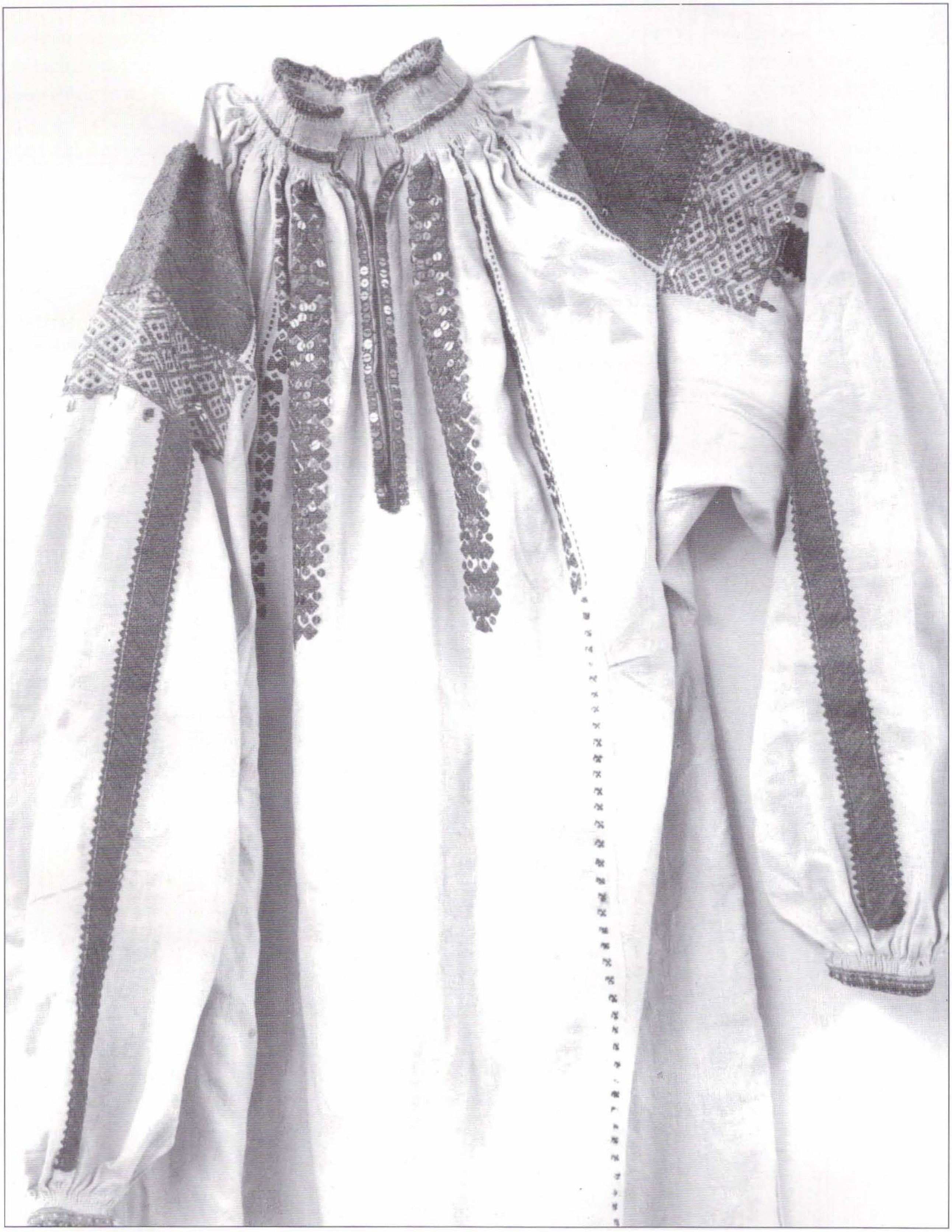
Unlike the female costume, the male folk costume is closer related to the specific occupations and to the local climatic conditions.

In the warm season, men would cover their heads by wheat straw hats or cloth hats with slightly raised rims (locally called "priest hats"). In winter, they would wear lamb fur caps, *peaked* for the young men and "with bottom" (round shaped) for the aged men.

The male shirts were either straight or with inset. The home woven cloth for shirts was streaked by inserting thicker cotton threads in the warp, thus creating prominent bands. This cloth was known as cloth *with frames* or *with borders*. The cloth streaked with raw silk or with curled cotton was used to make festive shirts.

The straight shirt (*zoroclie*) was the oldest type in the zone. It was long below the knees, with a 5-6 centimetres wide straight collar and large loose sleeves. All the seams of this shirt were made by needle or crochet using an artistic technique. The festive shirt was richly decorated by narrow white *șabace* on the collar and by *bagadele* (little triangles) on the margins.

The shirt with inset that got into use at the end of the 19th century circulated in two variants: with straight inset, collar around the neck and large loose sleeves and with pleated inset, turned up collar and large sleeves tightened by cuffs (a cuff was called *bantă*).



The summer trousers (made of cotton for holidays) would be cut of four sheets seamed by the artistic technique *cheiţă*. They were larger in the upper part and tighter down the knees and the decorations were placed at the end of the legs (*şabac*, geometrical and vegetal motives and *bagadele* along the hems).

Men all over the zone would wear homespun cloth *nădragi* (also called *dimii*) made of black, blue or brown cloth woven in the technique of the four threads. Cut of four-six sheets, the *nădragi* had the lateral sides, pockets and hems ornamented by black, red, blue, yellow or white cords.

Another costume piece for the cold season was the double breasted cloth vest ornamented by coloured cords or festoon and white laces. Men would also wear vests called *ielice*, with turned up red sides (like lapels) and ornamented by white and black cords.

Men in a few settlements in the west of Wallachia used to wear white tight *nădragi* cut of two sheets, four gores and a bottom. These trousers had turned up and sides split margins and were ornamented by black or dark blue cords.

The male woollen girdle was woven in the technique of the four threads, with red background and tassels at the ends. By the First World War, streaked girdles got into use. The streaks were made of warp or of warp and filling and these girdles also ended with tassels. Men in the villages in the south of Wallachia would wear girdles with vertical streaks made of warp, horizontal polychrome bands made by using the loom piece *spetează* and long tassels at the ends.

On holidays, men would wear at the waist a cotton homemade towel (*şervet*) decorated by streaks and polychrome sewn or woven patterns. They would also tie on their girdles lamb leather bags for tobacco and money.

Men would also wear white frieze leggings, wrapped around the legs up to the knees and fixed with wool, goat hair or horsehair strings. Over the leggings they would put on *opinci* made of pig, cattle or horse leather with a little *beck* (*cioc*), creased on the front or both on front on sides. Many *opinci* had a kind of tongue at the base of the beck for supporting the leather strap that fixed the *opinci* on the feet. Men could also wear their leggings over white or black wool knitted stockings, ornamented in the upper parts by polychrome sewn vegetal motives and by little crocheted triangles.

White wool boot legs ornamented by black or dark blue cords would be worn over the stockings and leggings in many villages.

On holidays, men wore high black or yellow boots with soft pleated bootlegs, boots with elastic and *iminei* (a kind of leather army boots with spurs at the back).

The range of fur coats customary in the area had been worked by local furriers or bought from the towns Caracal, Corabia, Roşiori or from the local fairs.

The most frequent fur coats were the *burticare* – sewn up and split waistcoats ornamented by applied leather and vegetal motives sewn with soft wool on the pockets, breast and back and bordered by black lamb fur (*zagara*) trimmings.

The sewn up waistcoats and the famous sheepskin coats with *cosoaie* could be bought from Caracal. Only the well-off could afford to wear such expensive coats richly adorned by vegetal motives and polychrome rosettes sewn with soft wool and by *cosoaie* (spirals) made of applied green *ihră* (*irhă* – leather) and black cords. The sheepskin with *cosoaie* had the same ornamentation as the waistcoats on the sides of the opening, on the sleeves and back.

The festive male *pleated* (*creţ*) sheepskin coat had 20-24 gores; it was long and ornamented by vegetal motives sewn with polychrome soft wool around the waistline, on the breast and sleeves.

Men could wear the *chebă* over the waistcoat and the sheepskin coat. This *chebă* was a hip-long or slightly longer grey cloth coat with band collar or large collar like a hood and it was ornamented by cords.

In winter, the men could wear over the *chebă* the *ipingea* (or *imurluc*), which was an ankle-long black, white or brown thickened cloth coat woven in the technique of the four threads and cut of four-five sheets sewn on the width. The *ipingea* could be with or without sleeves, it had lateral gores, straight collar around the neck and a hood called *chepeneag*. It was buttoned by wooden or leather buttons and ornamented by cords around the neck, on the sleeves and laps and by polychrome sewn patterns on the hood.

A special aesthetic vision upon the costume could be remarked in the clothing of the women in the south of Wallachia (Vlaşca area). The characteristic piece of this local variant of costume was the *peşteman* that dressed the body from the waist down. The *peşteman* was made of a rectangular home woven material, large and with small pleats. Against the black background, the polychrome patterned sides and the red streak on the lap created the particular decoration of this costume piece. The *peşteman* was always associated to a front red or olive *boscea*, decorated by horizontal and parallel motive ranges.

By its ornamentation manner and the red streak on the lap, the *peşteman* of Vlaşca resembles the *fotă* and by its size (large, pleated) and manner of wearing reminds us the *vâlnic* of Oltenia.

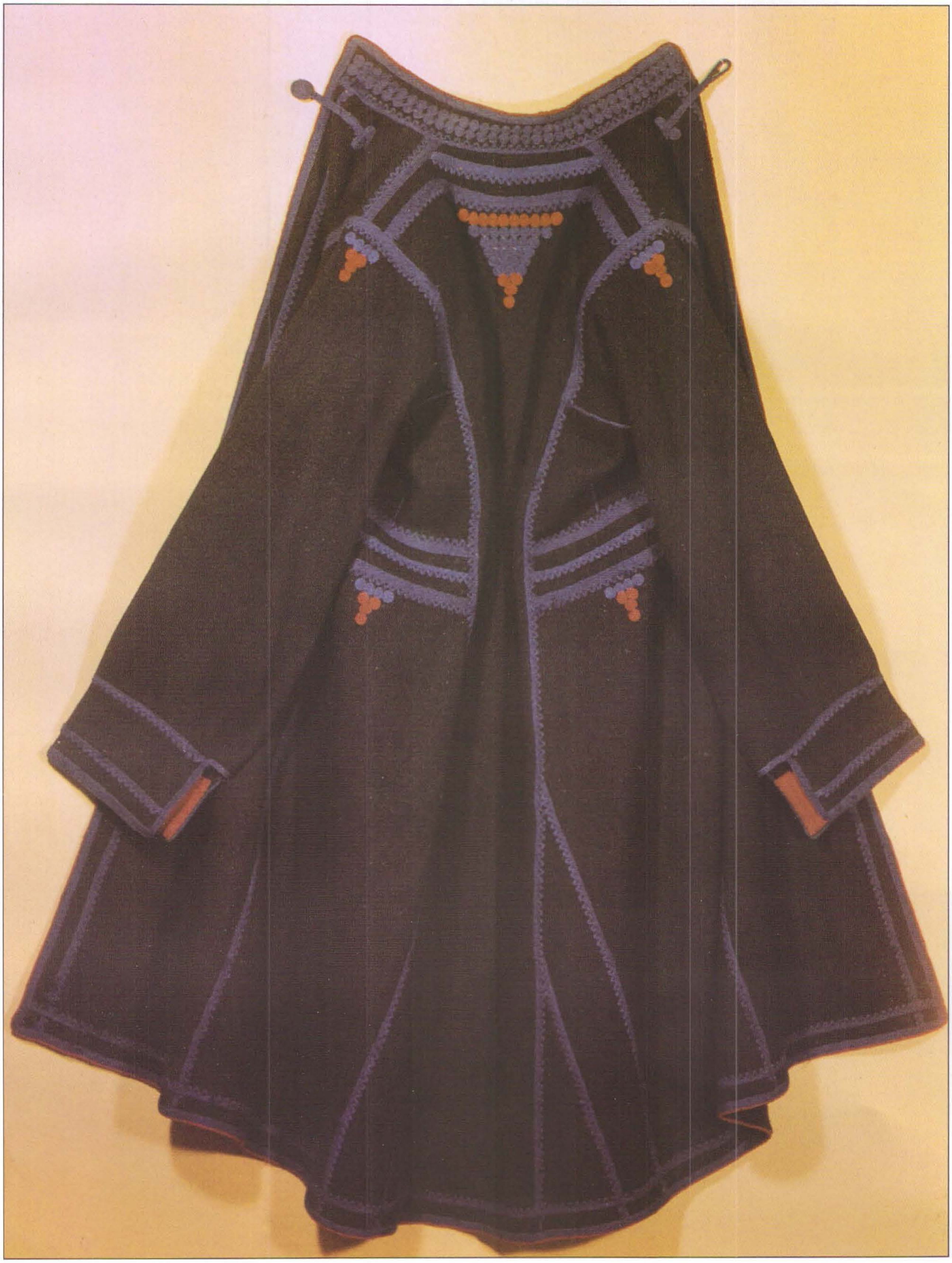
The headdress of Vlaşca was composed of the iron *conci* wrapped in cloth (locally called *mechelet*), fixed on the head by an annex triangular piece over which the large raw silk head kerchief (*marama*) would be put. This headdress resembles the one of Teleorman but the manner of wearing the *maramă* is different: women in Vlaşca draw one end of it over the crown of the head and fix it with decorative hairpins so as the free corner would cover the middle of the forehead.

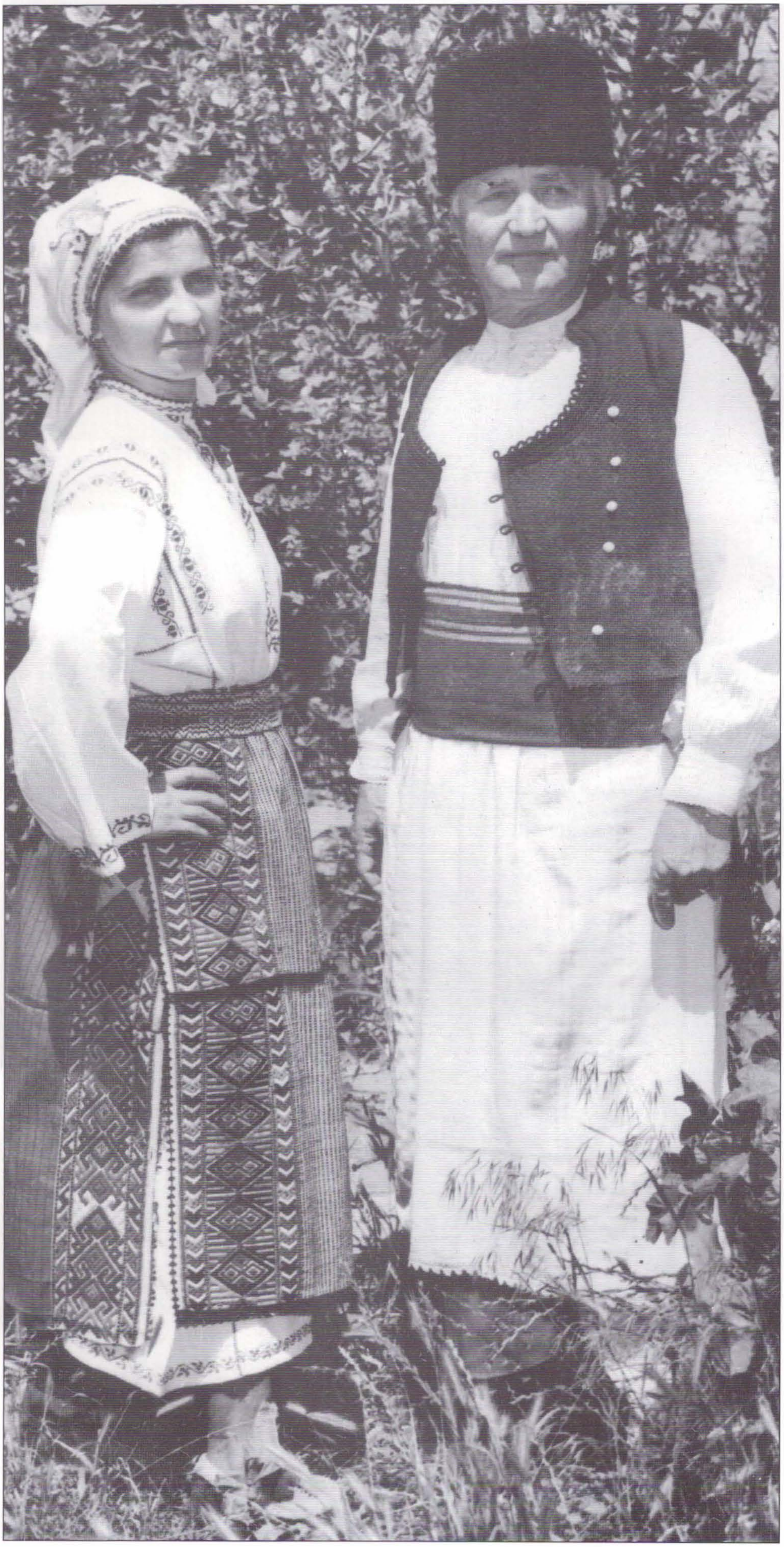
Another similarity of the Vlaşca costume with that of Teleorman is the squared pattern that partitions the rows that form the *altiţă* on the sleeves of the female folk shirt.

The wearing of very large trousers called *poturi* reflects the oriental-Balkan influence exerted upon the folk costume in the area.

The male and female folk costumes of Wallachia are characterized by harmony, balanced proportions, technical virtuosity, decorative and chromatic refinement, all these features reflecting the taste and aesthetic view of many generations of folk creators that draw original plastic patterns out of the traditional models.

Teleorman **ipingea** →





The Bărăgan and Dobrudja

The folk costume in the cultural space of the lower Danube has certain local elements that distinguish it from the clothing of neighbouring areas and also from the other types of costume in Romania. Therefore, the problem of origin appears interesting, moreover because the spreading area of this type of costume coincides almost miraculously with the ancient territory of the former Roman province Moesia Inferior which was inhabited by the Thracian-Getae in the past.

The question arises regarding the structuring of a specific aesthetical canon in this lower Danube land. Why do we find here an original "decorative program" so long-lasting and present – with negligible modifications – for centuries in the area? The fact remains that the folk costume of this region is characterized by an impressive stylistic unity that might be the consequence of a process of perpetuating certain archetypal models up to our days.

It is absolutely necessary to have the essential historical information to understand which factors contributed to the begetting of this ancient and unitary culture on both sides of the Danube and in what way the spiritual culture of some past ages reflected in life conceptions, moral precepts and particularities of technique, style and artistic expression of the population in this area.[33]

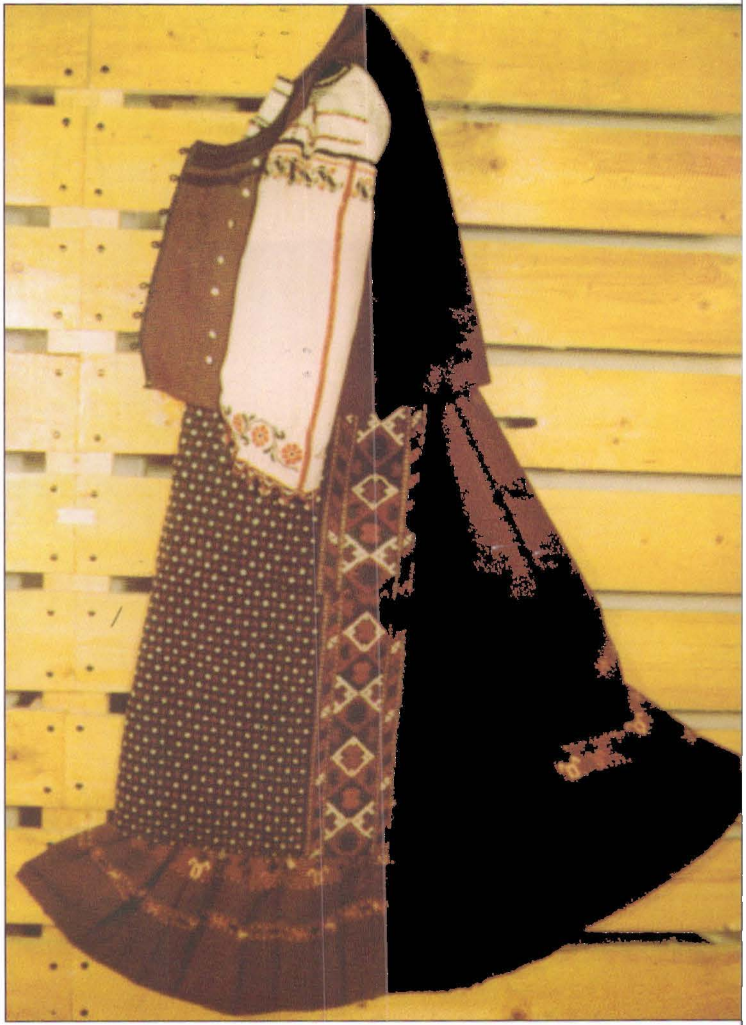
For a long time, the vast Romanic cultural area comprising the Danube Plain, the south of Moldavia, Dobrudja, the Bugeac and the north-east of the Balkan peninsula (today in Bulgaria) formed a military, political and administrative unity with a homogeneous life style that could not but leave marks on the evolution and further development of the native culture of the Romanized Getae.

After the fall of the Danube limes and the settling of the Slavs in the Balkan Peninsula, the Dacia at the north of the Danube becomes the gravitation centre of the oriental Romanism.

The geographic environment and the life conditions of the inhabitants on both sides of the lower Danube were similar as the Danube became an interior river of the Byzantine Empire after it had been an interior river of the Roman Empire and previously, a water track that united the Thracian-Getae world.

The similar living conditions of the populations with a common ethnic background lead to the development of related styles in the art of the peoples that developed along the great river.

In the Middle Ages, this geographical space was crossed by highly important trade routes: linking the Danube mouths with Lvov and Crimea, the Balkans and the Baltic Sea; crossing the Central Europe from the Adriatic Sea through the Romanian Countries and to Flanders.[34] After conquering the Balkan states and turning them into imperial provinces, the Ottoman Empire also defeated the Romanian fortresses north



*Traditional costume from the Constanța zone: straight shirt, **androc**, **pestelcă** and vest*

← *Couple from Dobrudja in traditional costumes*

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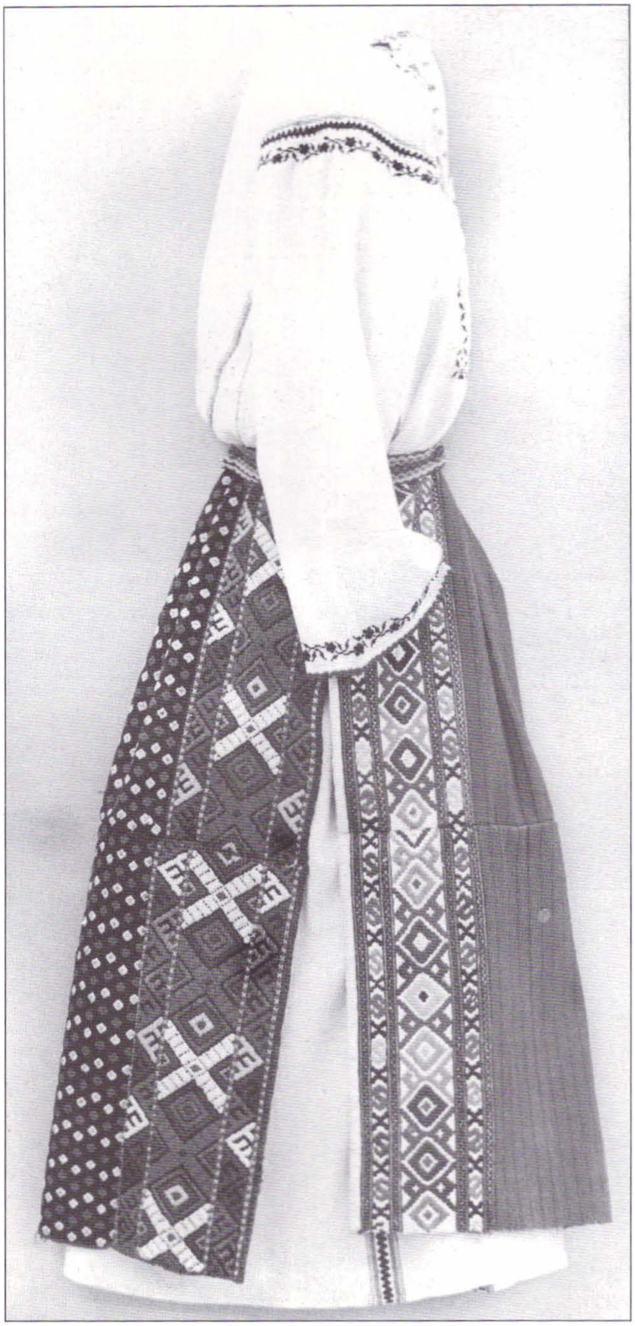
[33] Elena Secoşan; Maria Bâlcă, *Costumul popular al Dunării de Jos. Origini şi evoluţie (The Folk Costume in the Lower Danube Area. Origins and Evolution)*, pp. 7-21.

[34] *** *Enciclopedia geografică a României (Geographic Encyclopaedia of Romania)*, p. 155.



Folk costume from the Constanţa zone: straight shirt and ***pestelci***

of the Danube (Turnu (Măgurele), Giurgiu, Brăila) turning them and the surrounding territories into Turkish outposts (*raiale*). The same fate had the Moldavian fortresses along the river Dniester: Cetatea Albă, Tighina and Hotin.

Dobrudja was under Ottoman occupation as early as 1420 and the Buceac area as early as 1538.

The four centuries of Ottoman domination upon the geographic area along the lower Danube have set their mark upon the evolution of folk culture. Some Balkan-oriental elements – the fez, the jewels made of Turkish gold coins (*icuşari, mahmudele*), the passement, the cut of the male trousers (large and with bottom, similar to shalvars), the *zăbune* – were included in the local costume without as much as altering its basic structure.

A research of the folk costume in general and of the Dobrudja costume in particular should take into account the role of the demographic factor with historical and ethnographic significance.

The frequent wars that devastated the Dobrudja land affected the share of the Romanian population in the area, which was larger in peaceful times and smaller in times of war. According to documents and impressions of the foreign travelers, the native Romanians (the so-called *dicieni*) occupied the whole Danube side from the mouths of the river to the town Silistra and they represented an element of continuity on this territory in all times. The Romanian population of Dobrudja continuously increased in numbers as a consequence of the migrations of the Romanians from Wallachia in Moldavia under very difficult social circumstances in the 17th and 18th centuries. Along time, the Romanians in the neighbouring districts (Ialomiţa, Buzău, Brăila) – who were called *cojani* – then those of the peripheric districts of Moldavia (the Moldavians) preferred to settle in Dobrudja where they found better life conditions and they increased the rural population in the area or even founded new villages.

The Romanian peasants in the north of the Danube have increased in numbers also because Romanians from the hilly Carpathian areas and from the south of the Danube but also Transylvanian shepherds (especially from the traditional shepherding areas: Braşov, Sibiu, Făgăraş) came and settled in Dobrudja.

By settling permanently in Dobrudja, where they founded stable and long lasting villages, the shepherds (*mocani*) consolidated the continuity of the Romanian population in the area for centuries. By trade (at first practiced concomitantly with the shepherding and then as an independent occupation), they eased the circulation of various costume pieces on a vast geographic area.

The Romanians who came to Dobrudja maintained and kept the costume of their native regions but they also influenced the local costume that included elements adopted from the new comers. To pick just one example, women in Constanţa district would wear the autochthonous straight shirt but also the "shepherd's" (*mocănească*) shirt pleated around the neck.

By the cultural space of the lower Danube we mean a vast geographic area spreading beyond the Romanian borders, including in the country the Bărăgan (the districts Ilfov, Ialomiţa, Călăraşi, Brăila and Galaţi), the Dobrudja (the districts Tulcea and Constanţa) and the Bugeac (in the south of the Republic of Moldavia) and the northern Bulgaria between the Danube and the Balkans.

Under similar life conditions, in this geographic area with common history people have developed an original system of artistic and ornamental forms rooted in the local tradition according to which they have created a unitary and well-contoured stylistically type of costume.

The constitutive elements of the costume are the shirt associated with the two *catrinţe* (locally called *ote, zăvelci, boscele* or *pestelci*).

The prototype of the specific clothing in the area of the lower Danube is defined by the straight shirt – like a tunic – always associated with the two *catrinţe.*

In Bărăgan, the straight shirt (called *zoroclie*) is characterized by morphologic and stylistic unity conferred by the materials and the manner of associating various fibers, by the cut elements and their specific names and also by the decorative system.

The comfortable economic status of the inhabitants of the area lead to the use of diverse and high quality materials (linen, cotton, raw silk) for making clothes. Diverse cotton materials were used since the fourth decade of the 19th century: *bumbăcel* (little cotton), *inişor* (little linen), *bumbac de spumă* (foam cotton). The festive shirts had were made of little linen (the warp) and raw silk (the filling), association of fibers with powerful decorative effect.

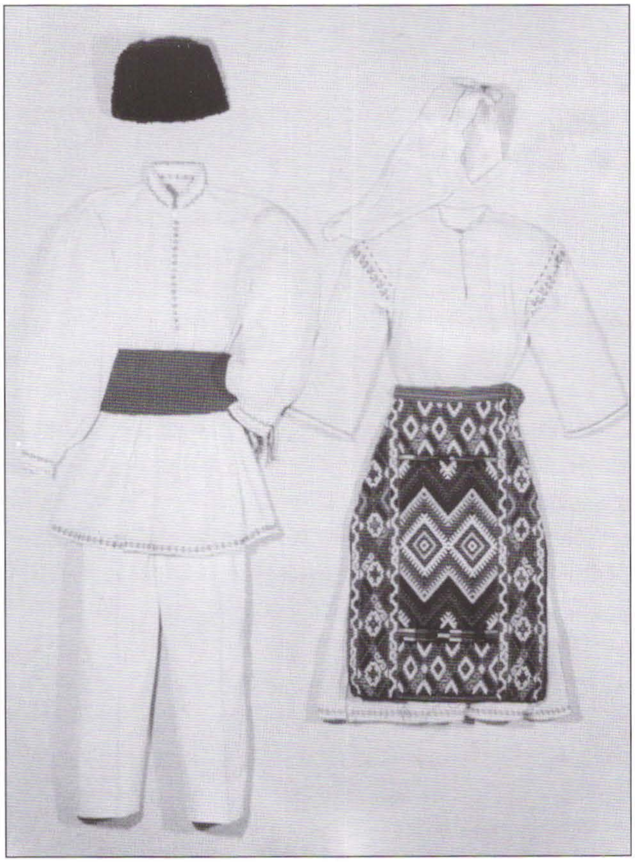
In the warp of the basic material women would insert red, blue, black and more rarely yellow dyed cotton threads, alternating a coloured portion (tooth) with three or four white portions (teeth) and obtaining the so-called streaking with the loom piece *spetează.* Another loom piece (*suvelniţa*) was used to fill the warp with streaks made of the same dyed coloured thread. Another type of streaks could be made by inserting thicker and twisted white cotton threads in the warp. The thickness of this cotton thread (locally called *sacâz* or *tiriplic*) gave relief to these streaks called *marne.* Raw silk streaks would decorate the festive shirts.

The streaking would begin from the margin of the cloth and that is why it was called "cloth with margin" or "*marne* of *tiriplic*" or "cloth with frame" (in Bărăgan, the south of Dobrudja and of Bessarabie – Moldavia on the left side of the Prut river) and "*chirachie* cloth" (in the villages in the north of Dobrudja) or "with teeth" or "with strips" in the Vulcăneşti county (the south of Bessarabie). Besides the streaks woven at the ends of the material (*marne*), women would also weave streaks on the middle part of the cloth and these were suggestively named "middles".

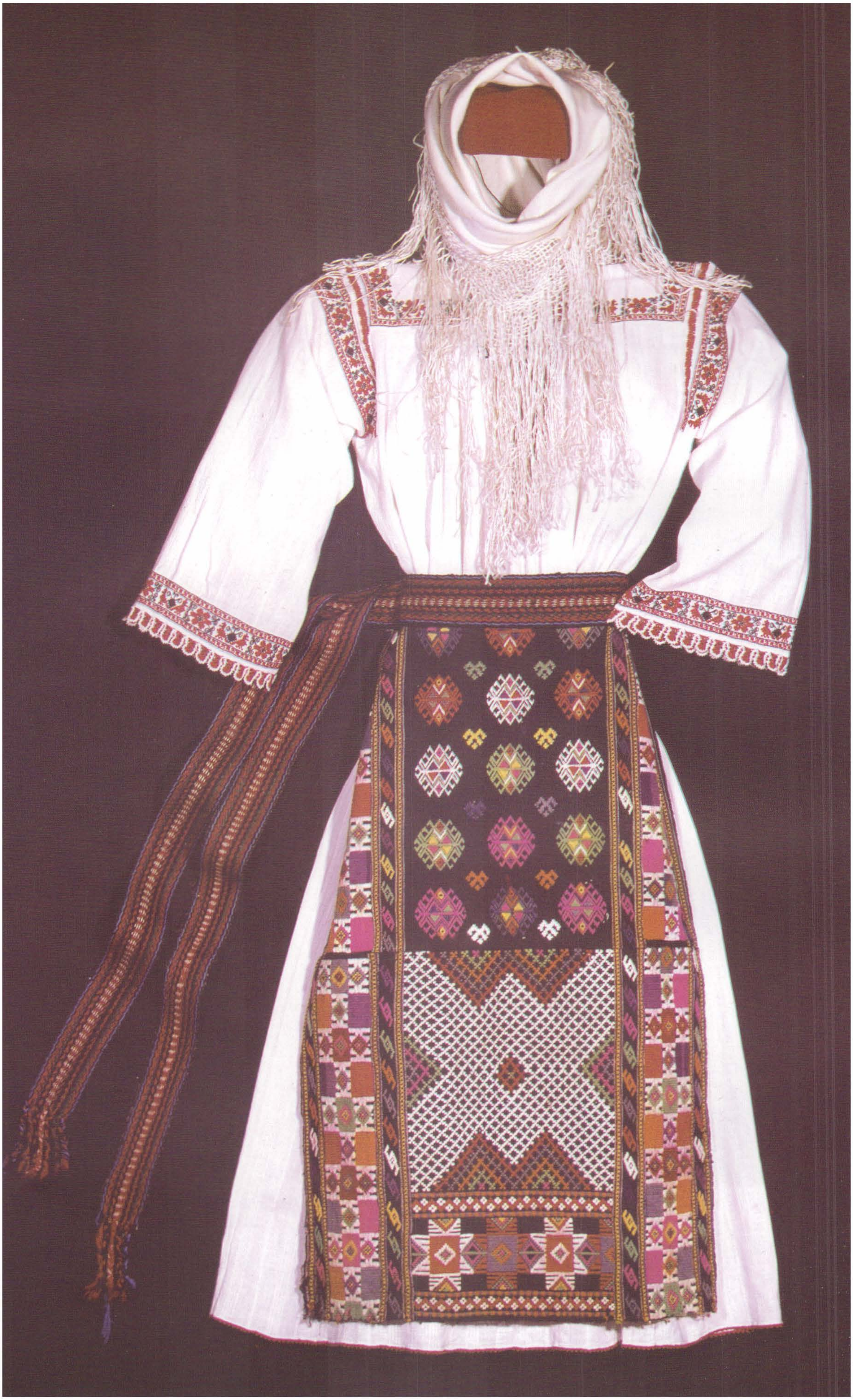
The *stani* and the sleeves of the festive shirts in the south of Bessarabie were woven in the loom with brown streaks made of cotton dyed with copperas and they were ornamented by *raisings* made with the loom piece *spetează,* by using white cotton thread and the technique of the three-five threads.

The streaks in the texture of the cloth, which were made of various fibres, constituted a decorative system that combined with the geometrical or vegetal stylized sewn motives and amplified the artistic value of the shirt.

The ingenious cut systems that demonstrated the adaptation to the practical needs of the life in Bărăgan and Dobrudja have been maintained up to our days. A remarkable procedure was that of the cut with *taken out gores.* To both sides of the back of the shirt there were large gores around the hips and women would



Folk costumes from the Tulcea zone



add to these gores smaller triangular gores. Such a small gore was made by cutting off the top triangle (with a straight side of about 20 centimetres) of the diagonally cut piece of material used to make the larger gore. The role of this *taken out gores* was that of strengthening the seam between the larger gore and the body of the shirt.

The straight shirt was initially without collar, cut around the neck or with a square neck cut (south of Bessarabie) and then it had a narrow collar band. The upper part of the shirt was called *ciupag* or *nadă* in the whole area and the lower part was called *laps* (*poale*). The shirt could be made by a single piece (as the old straight shirt) or with laps sewn to the *stani* at waist level (in Bărăgan and Dobrudja) or at hip level (in the south of Bessarabie, Cahul and Vulcăneşti counties).

The sleeves of the shirt were large and loose or tightened with cuffs (*little bracelets – brăţărui* or *mangete* in some villages in the south of Bessarabie) in the shape of 5 centimetres wide bands buttoned with *bumbi*.

The manners of attaching the different pieces of the shirt one to another evolved from simple functional sewing points – seams and tacks – to highly ornamental sewing points. A frequent sewing technique was the *cheiţă* (*little key*) that united the visible margins of the pieces of material with artistic effect. The *cheiţă* could be made with red, blue or black dyed cotton thread and it had various names from one village to another: *big seam, two-feet seam, and net*, according to the points used by the creator.

The hems of the cloth around the neck, at the ends of the sleeves and laps were strengthened by simple or double pierce rows that developed to the *şabac*, a decoration of drawn out white threads (like a needle-made lace).

Another common element that confers stylistic unity and artistic value to this shirt in the whole area of research is constituted by the small triangles that adorn the collar, the neck opening, the ends of the sleeves and laps. They have various local names: *bibiluri, bagadele, moţorele, nodăţele* (in Bărăgan and Dobrudja), *zimţişori* (little indentations – in the Cahul county), *zimţi* (indentations – in the Căuşani county) and *gheboşi* (crooked – in the Vulcăneşti county). These ornaments are made with the needle using white or coloured thread. Those at the ends of the shirt sleeves (called *tandică* in the south of Bessarabie) require a virtuoso technique and usually they are further adorned by small polychrome beads.

These corners are strengthened and festooned by sewing minuscule points that create the aspect of lace. Originating in functional sewing technique, the technique of the *bibil* reached great amplitude and refinement in the cultural space of the lower Danube.

The stylized geometric or vegetal decoration is discreet on the straight shirt and it is placed along the cut lines at the neck, shoulders, and the ends of sleeves and laps or even on the collar if the shirt has one. The sewing techniques for ornamental purpose were: "behind the needle", "in little crosses", "on the thread" and they were made by using red and black or red and blue dyed cotton, red (*nărânzat*) raw silk thread (boiled and dyed) or coloured soft wool thread.

The main feature of the ornamental composition of the straight shirt in the lower Danube area is the combination of the woven and sewn decorative systems.

The identity value of the Dobrudja costume is also conferred by the *catrinţă* with a special typology and by the decorative model that is observed by all the local-zonal variants.

While in the other areas where the costume with paired *catrinţe* is worn the *catrinţă* is made of two sheets of materials sewn on the length at the middle of the piece, the *pestelcă* specific to the lower Danube area has sheets that are always sewn on the width, determining thus a certain position of decoration, unique in the ornamentation of *catrinţe*.

The ornamental composition of the *pestelcă* is organized into vertical decorative bands, perfectly symmetrical on the lateral sides of the piece and known as *ghenare* or *vărgi* in the whole space of the lower Danube.

It should be mentioned from the start that the *pestelcă* specific to the lower Danube area has exclusively geometrical ornamentation, fact that constitutes the undeniable proof of the antiquity and authenticity of this costume piece.

The placement of the decoration on the *pestelcă* is atypical compared to the patterns of plastic expression applied in the other areas where the costume with paired *catrinţe* is worn. Whether the usual composition of the *catrinţă* is organized along horizontal parallel axes and it includes differently coloured bands concentrated and compact towards the laps of the piece (where they form the so-called "thresholds"), the

← *Folk costume from the Tulcea zone*

pestelcă in the lower Danube area has to be decorated by the two lateral vertical streaks called *vargă la mame* or *ghenar în picioare* (*standing frame*). Such an original ornamentation marks the unique specificity of this area where the costume has preserved archaic and authentic models for centuries.

Therefore, the two vertical bordering decorative bands - each approximately 10 centimetres wide - contain only geometrical motives (*patterned flower, doll's mouth, cioltar - saddle cover, little snails* etc.) compacted on the lateral margins of the *pestelcă* and bordered by small rows of motives (plastically called *turned* or *waved* motives), severely oriented along the same straight lines as the bands. Together with the *ghenar* (*frame*), these bands form the highly original decorative program of the costume in the area of the lower Danube.

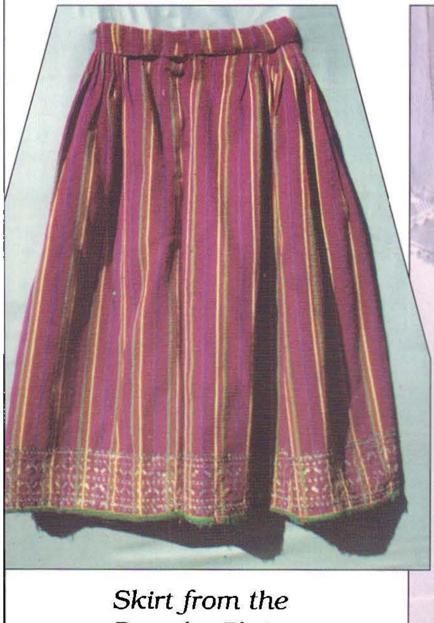
The manner of ornamenting the *pestelcă* between the two lateral border bands created numerous local-zonal variants. In the zone Ilfov, the field of the *pestelcă* was "smooth" and unornamented, only sometimes it had groups of three-four narrow streaks (streaks "put in the warp") made by inserting differently coloured threads into the warp at the margins of the material. The *pestelcă* in other zones of Ilfov and Călăraşi could also have the whole ornamental field streaked by narrow vertical stripes.

The *pestelcă* in the zones Călăraşi and Ialomiţa Valley was richly adorned by a "streak patterned across the cloth" which appeared as a horizontal bordering lap band that was similar to the two lateral frames and it was compactly structured of geometrical motives, uniting the lower ends of the lateral frames.

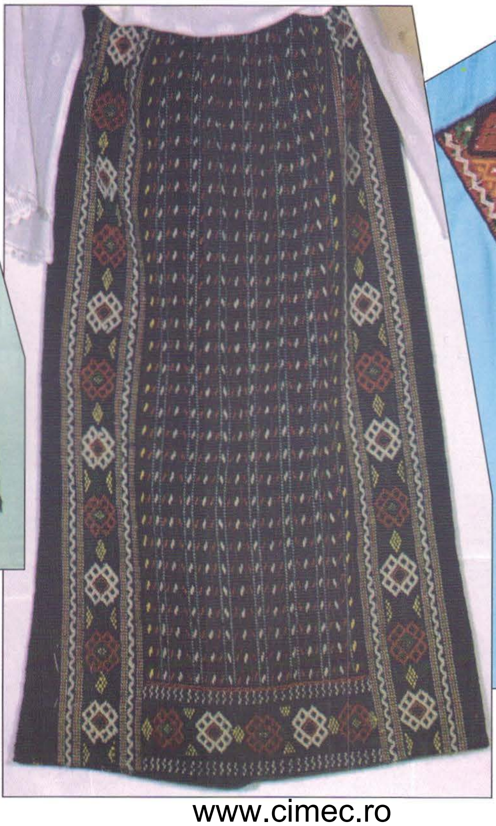
In the zone Constanţa, the body of the *pestelcă* was ornamented by *sprinkling* or *buds*, some small dots uniformly sprinkled all over the material. The same type of *pestelcă* would sometimes exhibit a streaked middle decoration.

Nevertheless, the most complicated decoration characterizes the *pestelcă* in the zone Tulcea, which appears as a carpet at first sight. To the patterned streak on the laps other categories of motives are added. A main range on the lower sheet of the *pestelcă* is based on the motive called *peak* (angular motive that later evolved to the ornament called *mirror*) and a secondary range on the upper sheet is formed of small geometrical motives.

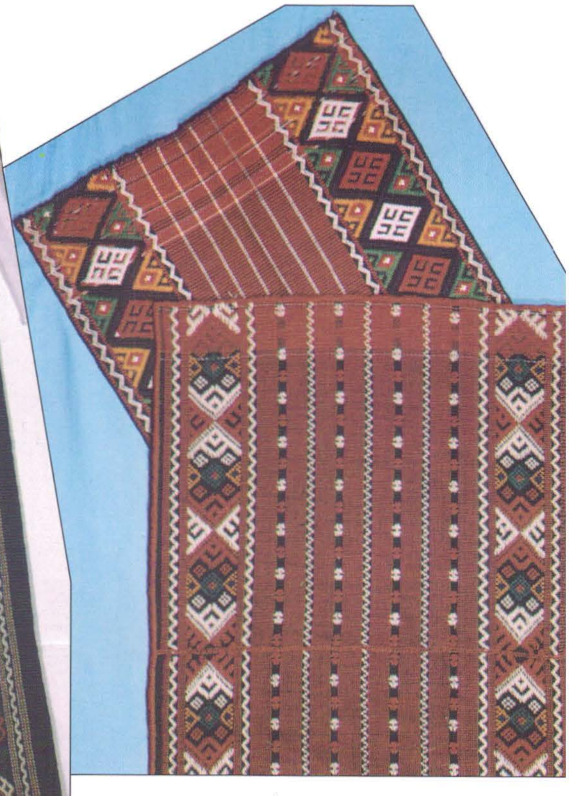
The body of the *pestelcă* was often ornamented by *streaking* - small coloured stripes introduced in the material by using the loom piece *suveică*, uniformly on the whole distance, at equal distances of 1.5-2 centimetres. The inventive Romanian peasant housewife gave to this *streaking* pattern different plastic names: *vărgătură pe trup* (streaking on the body), *bătaie la*



Skirt from the Danube Plain area



***Pestelcă** from the Bărăgan area*



***Pestelci** from the Giurgiu area*

trup (filling at the body), *beţişoare* (little sticks), *vărgătură în speteze* (streaking in speteze), *vărgi puse prin urzeală* (streaks put through warp), *vărgătură pe trup în picioare* (streaking standing on the body), *vărgătură din suvelniţă* (streaking by suvelniţă).

The *catrinţe* in the zones Brăila and Galaţi are part of the ornamental typology of Tulcea district but they are more modestly decorated while the *catrinţe* in Vaslui (a marginal zone in the spreading area of the *pestelcă*) just echo by their ornamental composition the decorative structure specific to the lower Danube *pestelcă*.

The decorative range patterned on the laps for the variants of *catrinţe* characteristic to the south of Bessarabie and the lower Dniester Valley was more complex than that of the *catrinţe* in the Bărăgan plain but much simpler that of the *catrinţe* of Tulcea. However, the *pestelcă* of Bugeac and the lower Dniester Valley, with horizontal angular motives on the lower part of the piece, between the two lateral borders, has clear affinities to the *pestelcă* in the north of Dobrudja.

In a later stage, the *pestelcă* specific for Bugeac became larger, reaching the width of 82-90 centimetres and it started to look like a slightly pleated apron.

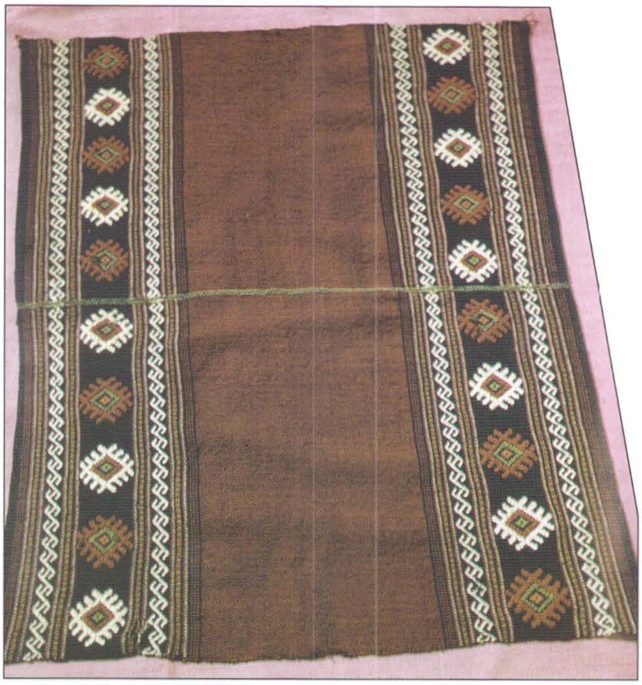
The *pestelcă* in the lower Danube area was made of the best quality of wool (hair), thinly spun and used for both warp and filling. In a later phase, hemp was used for the warp and then linen and imported cotton but the filling and patterning were always made of wool, the most priced material for peasants.

A *pestelcă* would be usually woven in the technique of the two threads, which facilitated the patterning by hand.

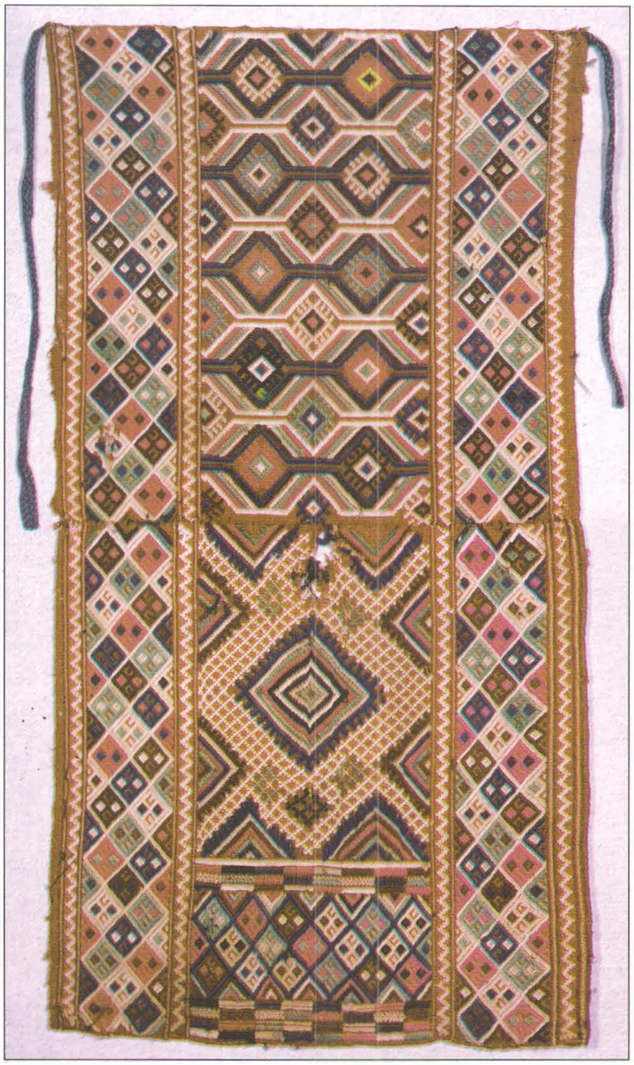
The weaving in the technique *taken out* (*scos*) with rare *spată* (one free space at the loom and another with a thread in the loom piece called *spată*) allowed the women to obtain a thick filling and the material would be dense and stiff like a wall carpet, it could "stand". If they used the *spată* more often, women could weave *cloth-like* with visible warp threads.

A weaving system of oriental provenience called *sumac* was spread only in Banat and Dobrudja, standing proof for the closer contacts of these two provinces with the Orient in the last centuries and including them in a certain cultural area.

Initially, the background of the *pestelcă* kept to the natural colour of the wool (dark brown or black), strengthened by using a natural dye based on a very popular plant (Lombardy poplar) in the lower Danube



Pestelcă *from the Bărăgan area*



Pestelcă *from the Tulcea area*

area. Later, the use of chemical dyes changed the colour of the *pestelcă* to very dark blue, then to red.

The ornamentation of the *pestelcă* is made by the loom pieces *spetează* or *suvelniță* (the *streaking*) or "by fingers" (the pattern woven by using only the hands). The woven patterns were always prominent as they were made by using a thicker wool thread and these prominences explain the name *bombiu* (*bulging*) material or *jowled pestelcă*.

Special sewing techniques were used to unite "by key" the two sheets that compose the *pestelcă* and to strengthen the margins of the material (by a procedure named locally "over the needle", "beaten with the needle" or *nodățică*).

The lateral frames of all the local-zonal variants of *pestelcă* were abstract and geometrical: angles, triangles, X-s, S-s (the S-shape was named *șetrangă* or *caterpillar* in the south of Bessarabie), lines, zigzags, meanders, *the walnut core* and also some astral motives (stars and solar lozenges).

Although the ornamental motives that compose the decoration were similar in all the zonal variants, the manner of associating them, their place and share in the composition (some could be principal, while others secondary) would differ and thus generate local decorative variants.

Although the ornamental motives have lost their magic-religious significance, they still preserve their plastic meaning, amplifying the aesthetic emotion by harmonious forms and colours.

The decorative elements on the *pestelcă* could be patterned in different techniques: "the patterning in *spetează*", "the patterning on the *rost*", "the patterning over the threads", "patterning with reed" etc. The patterns are made by using different colours and all the chromatic vibrations support the geometric structure of the lateral frames.

The authentic costume with two *pestelci*, specific to the whole area of the lower Danube, went out of use in the late 19th century and women began to wear town costume pieces like skirts and dyed cotton aprons.

The female folk costume was completed by necklaces made of gold coins (*icușari* and *lefți*) and by coin adornments for the forehead. Besides the traditional *opinci*, that they ceased to wear by the beginning of the 20th century, women would wear a kind of cloth boots over which they would put on a kind of slippers called *ciupici*, *meși* or *scarpeți*.

On holidays, women would wear red stockings and peasant shoes called *iminei* or *conduri*.

The festive overcoat for women was the *cațaveică* or *scurteică* made of home woven wool cloth or of industrial cloth, flaring due to the lateral gores, lined with sheep fur and trimmed with fox fur around the neck.

A very frequent overcoat was the *zăbun* that men could also wear. It was a short coat made of thickened wool cloth woven in the technique of the four threads, with lateral gores, without collar and buttoned up with *bumbi*. It had a quilted lining filled with wool.

Sewn up waistcoats and sheepskin coats were also worn in the area but they never reached the artistic quality that craftsmen in other areas had achieved as they had a scarce decoration composed of ornamental motives sewn with polychrome soft wool thread that were later replaced by applied strands of genuine or artificial leather.

The male costume of the lower Danube area was characterized by various types of caps: peaked, round, shepherd-type and "with circle" or "with zagara" (a kind of cuff overlapping the margin of the cap). In the summer, men wore rye straw hats at work and felt hats with round raised calotte and slightly turned up rim on holidays; depending on their occupation, they also wore shepherd hats, with round calotte and small rims.

The particular notes of the straight shirt are given by the largeness and pronounced length of this piece, by the streaking contained in the texture (and constituting an ornamentation system as such), by the white *șabace*, by the large-scale use of raw silk and also by the little triangles made by needle and placed at the margins of the hems.

The *trousers* belong to one of the two basic types: they can be straight and tight, made of white frieze, simple and unornamented and the large ones made of black, grey or dark blue cloth and ornamented with cord and *bârnaș* along the pockets, on the lateral seams and the lower margins.

The woollen girdles in the area were monochrome (white, grey, red or black) and long, circling the waist two or three times. They were decorated by transversal stripes and long twisted tassels at the ends and could be worn at the same time with *bete*.

The chimir, a piece of the shepherd costume with tight *cioareci*, was made of tanned leather and ornamented by sewing with leather strands.

The woollen vest (*ilic* or *giubea*) had sober colours (black, dark blue, brown or dark red), it was double breasted and ornamented by applied cord in the technique *nevedітură*.

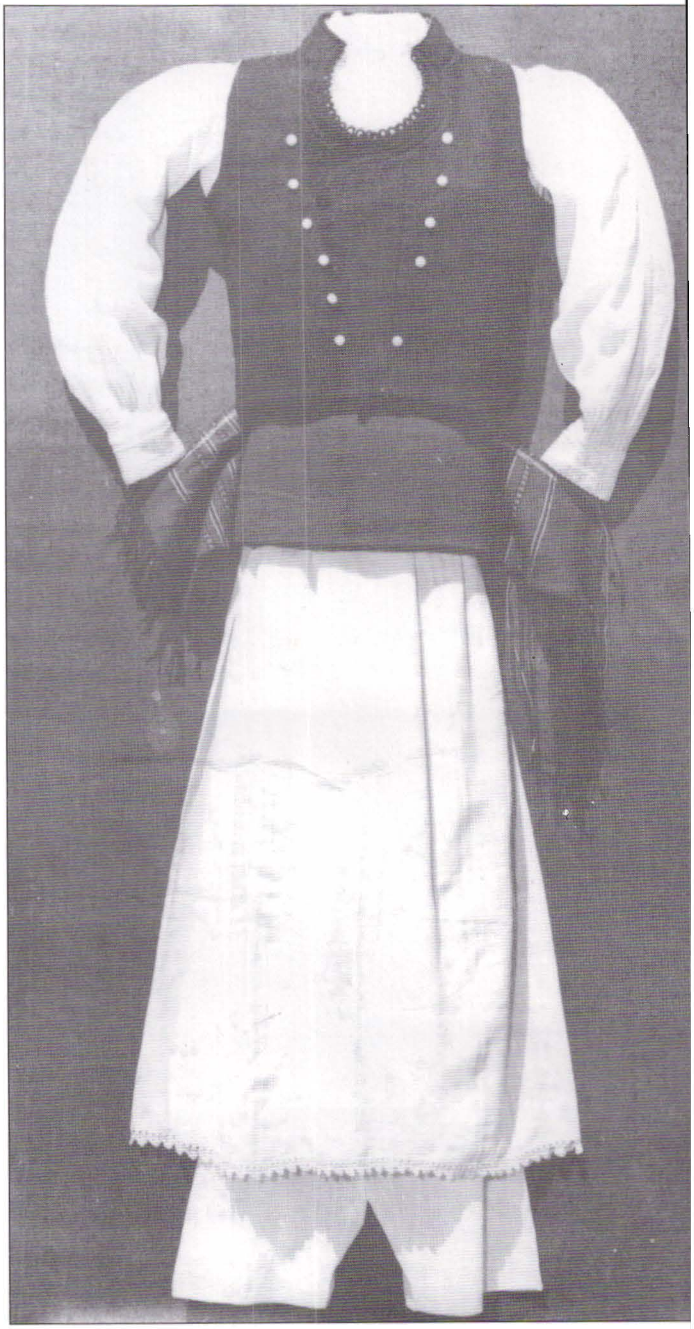
The opinci represented the basic male footwear. They were put on over leggings and fixed on by horsehair straps. On holidays, men would wear *iminei* or *conduri* in the summer and boots with creased bootlegs in the winter.

A specific male coat was the *flanea*. It was short and cut of straight sheets of wool cloth woven in the technique of the four threads, had sober colours, collar and sleeves and it was buttoned up laterally, on the left side. This costume piece was ornamented all over the material by thin stripes woven by using the technique *neveditură*.

During long journeys, men would put on the *mantle* or the *ghebă* over the waistcoat or the sheepskin coat. The mantle was a long, large, naturally coloured woollen coat, provided with gores and *gluguş* (a hood made of a rectangular piece of material) hanging down the back, under the collar. It was ornamented by cord braided of two threads (black and white), applied on the seams and men would wear it with the front sides overlapped and fastened on with *bete*.

The persistence of the type of costume with two *pestelci* only in this lower Danube space corresponding geographically to the ancient Roman province Moesia Inferior reveals the powerful individuality of the people of this land.

The decorative program begotten in the region of the lower Danube is the product of a spiritual climate that is different from that of other Romanian ethnographic regions, resulting out of a specific aesthetic concept that combines harmoniously elements of continuity and innovation.



*Folk costume: long straight shirt, **izmene**, vest and wide girdle*

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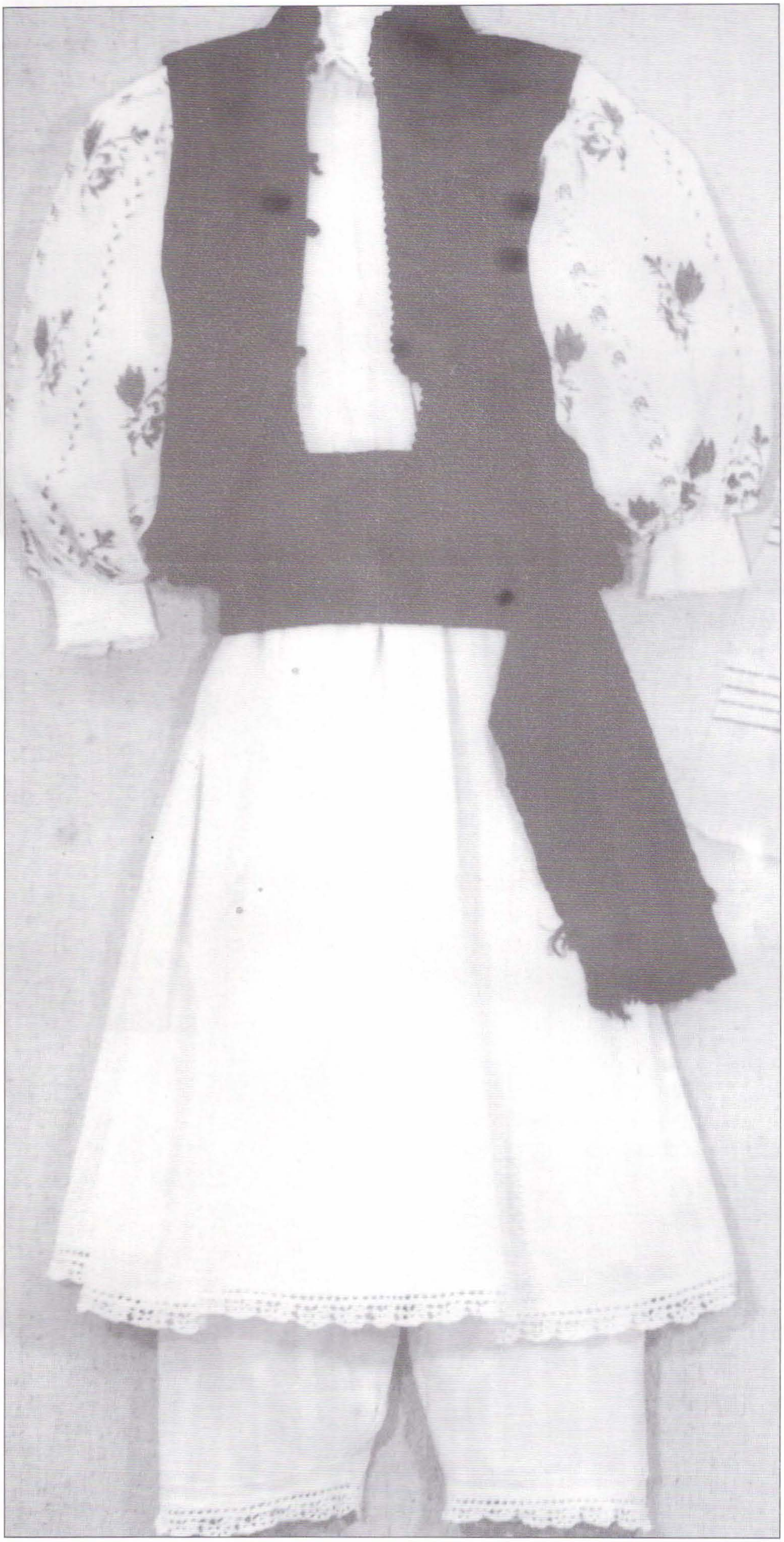
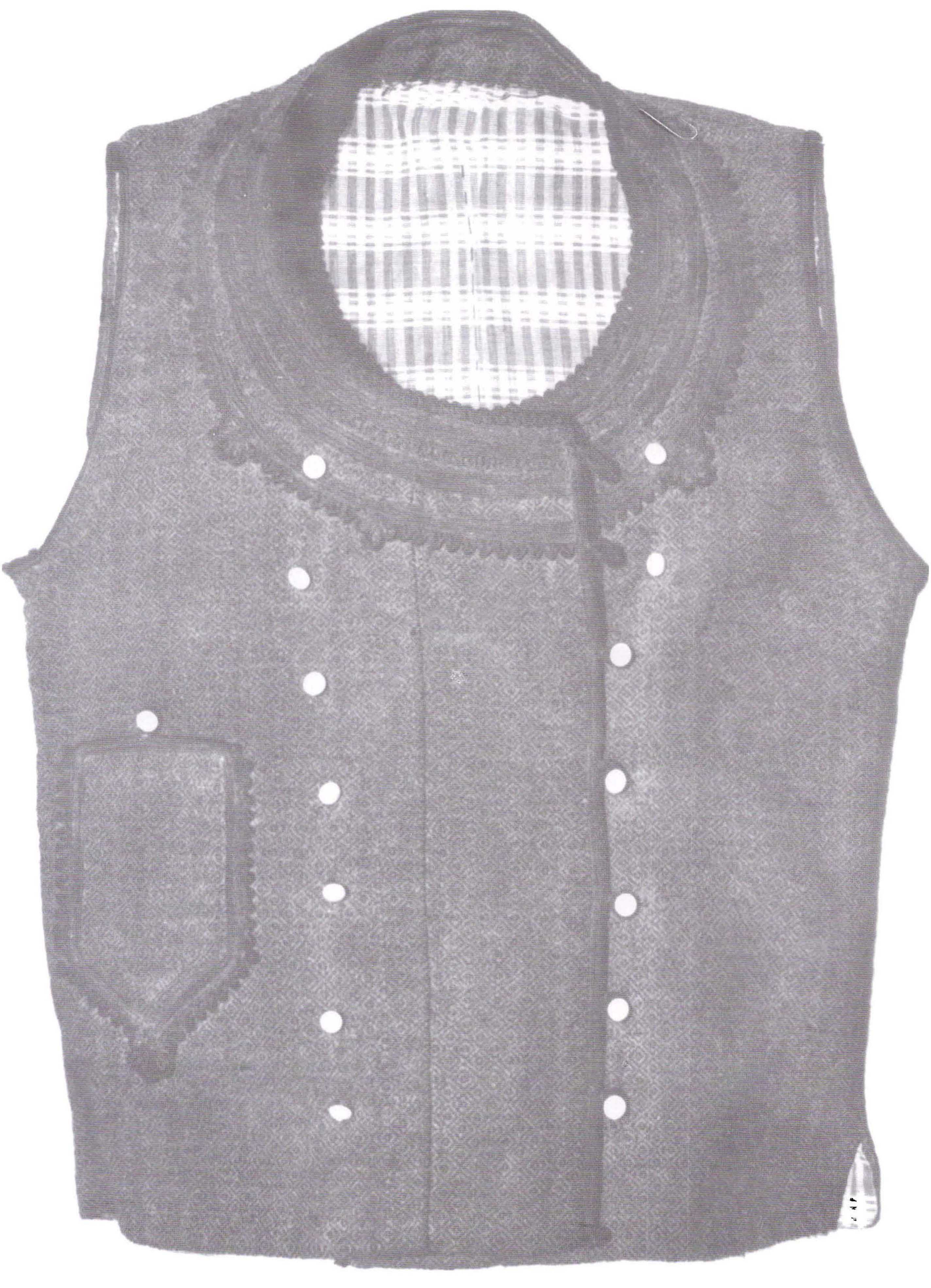
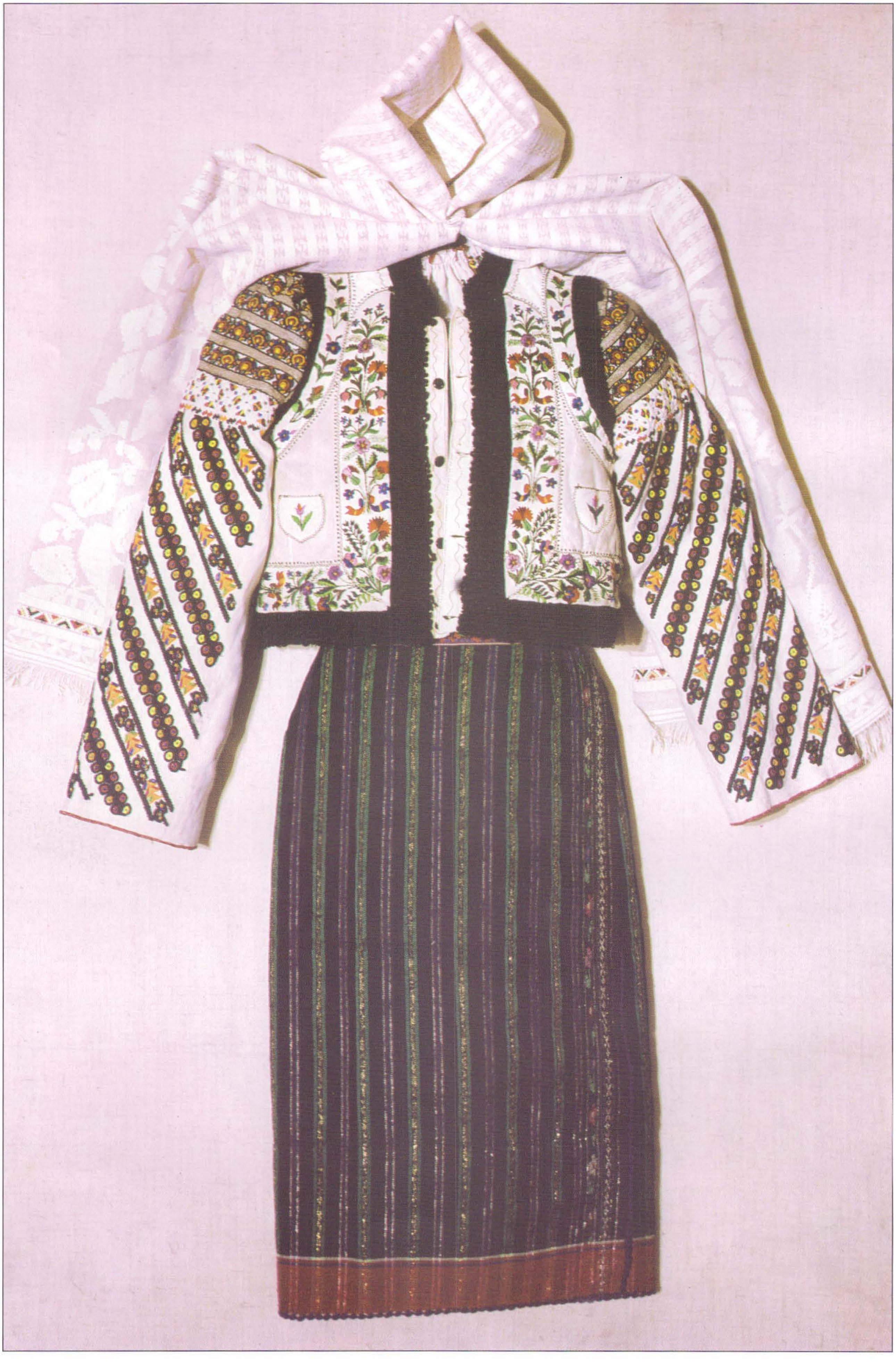
Male costume from the Danube Plains (page 164)

Vest from the Low Danube area (page 165)







Moldavia

Year after year, on the 4th of July, in the serene and beautiful landscape of northern Moldavia, large groups of peasants in traditional costumes set for the Putna Monastery to honour the memory of Voivode Stephen the Great, who founded dozens of churches and fortress-monasteries five centuries ago so as the faith, traditions and aspirations of his people should be protected.

The refined artistic taste of the local folk creators and the authentic creations by which they contributed to the national heritage are utterly explained by their cultural background as the religious architecture monuments at Putna, Voroneţ, Moldoviţa, Humor, Suceviţa, Neamţ, Agapia, Secu and Văratec were true cultural centres with workshops where the art of embroidery neared perfection.

The female costume of Moldavia is extremely distinguished, original and elegant.

Only certain women would have the skill to weave in the technique of many threads the textile pieces (known as *zăbranic, pânzătură, miniştergură, ştergar de cap*) that covered the head of married women of Suceava, Cernăuţi region and the centre of Bessarabie in all seasons. The centre of such skilfully woven material was ornamented by geometrical motives (lozenges and zigzags) while the margins were adorned by stylized vegetal motives patterned by inserting in the filling thicker threads of cotton of the same colour as the background with the effect of a prominent but discreet decoration. To enhance the plastic effect, the creators would end these textile pieces by fringes and sometimes by bands of red and dark blue beads.

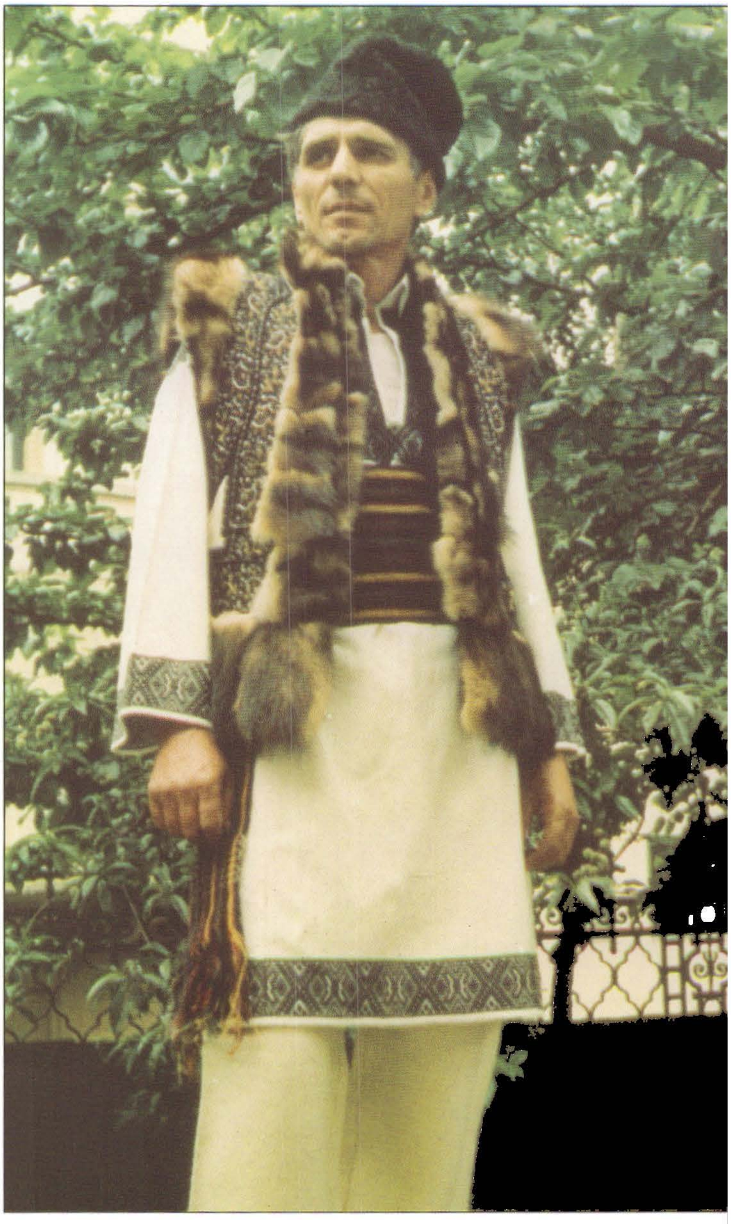
The manner of wearing the kerchief around the head, differing according to the various textile supports of the headdress (fez, triangular *tulpan, căiţă*), framed harmoniously the shape of the face making women look statuary.

Besides the head kerchief made of vegetal fibres (hemp, linen, cotton) and later of raw silk in some Moldavian areas (Botoşani, Bistriţa Valley, Iaşi, Vrancea) women used to weave head kerchiefs of prime wool which were not customary in the other Romanian regions.

The raw silk head cover *maramă* (locally called *fişiu* or *năframă*) would be decorated on its whole surface or only at the ends by patterns woven with white cotton or coloured silk, preferably geometric, stylized vegetal and bird-shaped motives. The red fez circulated on a large area (the zones Rădăuţi, Botoşani, Neamţ, Bacău, Vrancea, Vaslui, Galaţi and also the south of Bessarabie) and it had a ceremonial function in Moldavia. Godmothers would arrange the *fez* on the brides' head at the end of the wedding, marking thus ritually the girls' integration into the category of married women.

In the Moldavian area along both sides of the Prut River, the female shirt – belonging to the two basic types: straight and pleated around the neck – has many variants and particularities.

The collarless shirt pleated around the neck by hemp or linen string called *bezer* (locally known as shirt with *bezărău* or *brezărău*) has been in use up to the present as has been the type of shirt with the *altiţă* separately cut.



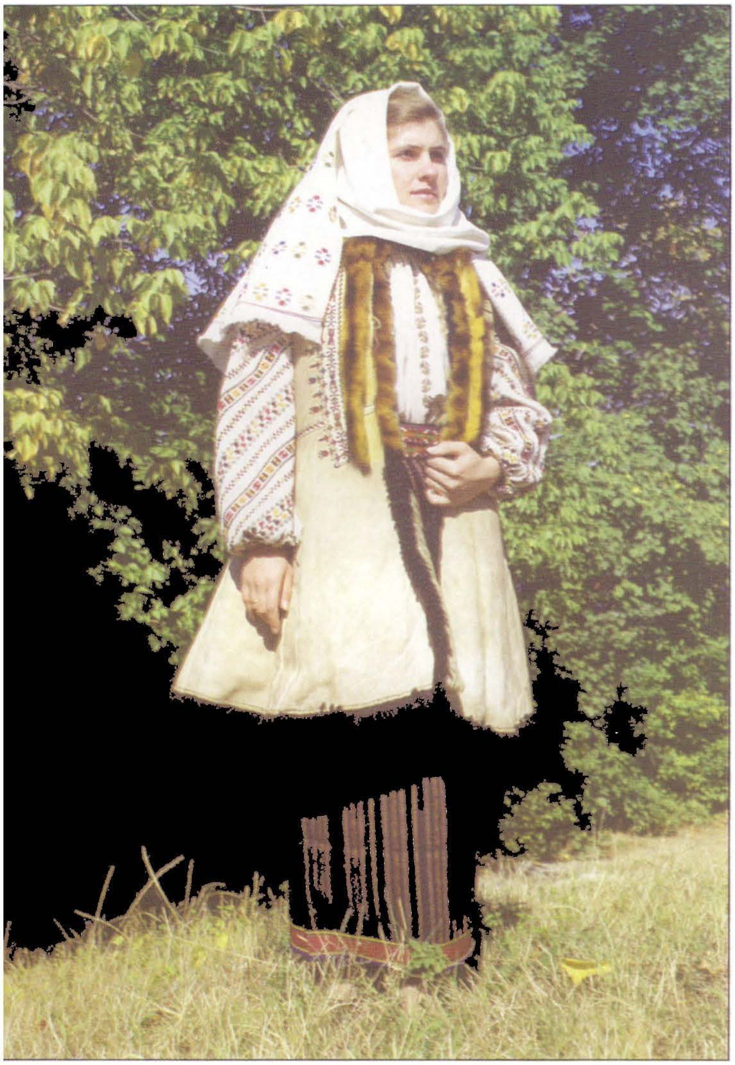
A man's folk costume from Bucovina

← *A woman's folk costume from Bucovina*

In the area on the left side of the Prut, the type of Carpathian shirt was more frequent in the northern and central Moldavian counties, while on the left side of the Dniester River and in the south of Bessarabie (Bugeac) the type of straight shirt with the variant of shirt with inset was predominant.

The rhythmic succession of coloured spots against the immaculate white cloth observed the decorative scheme of ancient tradition that was also present in other Romanian regions. The elements of decoration were the *altiţă*, *încreţ* (pleat) and *rânduri* (vertical or oblique rows, the latter named *costişate* – slanted).

The *altiţă* was sewn separately and sometimes woven and it was composed of several horizontal and parallel rows of geometric, bird-shaped (peacocks, pheasants, cocks) motives sewn with polychrome dyed cotton and golden thread. The *altiţă* was framed on three sides by a narrow frame made of tinsel and dyed cotton.



Clothing from Bucovina:
***ştergar**, shirt, **fotă**, gridled waistcoat and laps*

The next ornamental range was the *încreţ* (pleat), made of rhomboidal geometrical motives sewn "on the inside" with dyed cotton or white or yellow-orange silk thread. The *încreţ* was monochrome, creating a balance between the *altiţă* and the polychrome rows.

On both sides of the neck slide there were several rows of motives that would be sometimes present also on the back of the shirt.

The ornaments would be sewn with linen, wool, silk, dyed cotton and *strămătură*. To mark the limits of compositional ranges, the folk creators would use coloured threads, beads, metallic thread, tinsel and sequins, all these materials brightening up the decoration and enhancing the artistic effect of the motives.

Due to the inexhaustible fantasy of women, the variants of motives were impressive, ranging from geometrical motives (based on the lozenge, square, triangle, hexagon) to bird-shaped or anthropomorphic motives or to symbolic and stylized vegetal motives (fir tree, shamrock, wheat ear, vine cord, leaves and flowers) sewn by using different techniques: in *cruciţi* (little crosses), in *şătrăngi*, in *butuci* (stumps), in *împunturi* (jabs), in *păşituri* (steps), in *lanţ* (chain) etc.

The use of fibres with remarkable aesthetic qualities, of silver and golden thread, of polychrome beads and sequins, added to the alternation of ornamented and unornamented spaces/monochrome – polychrome spaces contoured the uniqueness and treasure value of each costume piece.

In a small area around Caşin (district of Bacău) and in the north of the Land of Vrancea, a special type of shirt was frequent. It was called shirt with *chiruşcă* and it had a triangular *altiţă* separately cut and placed on the shoulder with the sharp angle up. While in Caşin the *altiţă* was not ornamented as it was made of industrial material (imprinted or laced tulle) brought from Transylvania by tradesmen, the shirt with *chiruşcă* in the zone Vrancea *altiţă* was decorated with monochrome motives (red or black) sewn by using the old technique "fluffy" with wool or dyed cotton thread and its margins were embroidered with metallic thread.

The shirt pleated around the neck (of Dacian type) circulated in three variants in the Land of Vrancea: the shirt with *altiţă*, the shirt with *răură* (a 15 centimetres wide row of motives placed along the middle of the sleeve, from collar to cuff and ornamented in a manner that reminded of the shirt with *fuşti* in Muscel area) and the shirt with twisted sleeve (already mentioned).

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[35] Ion Cherciu, *Arta populară din Ţara Vrancei* (*The Folk Art of the Land of Vrancea*) p. 168.

The rich decoration of the Vrancea shirts, which was the result of the permanent contact between the peasant and the scholarly arts[35] has been enhanced by the use of aesthetic materials like golden and silver metallic threads, the *tel* (silver strands) and the pailletes (sequins) that made the folk costumes resemble the princely garments of the noble ladies.

Concomitantly with the Carpathian type of shirt, the straight shirt would be worn all over Moldavia (on both sides of the Prut), having the shape of a tunic and as material not only hemp, linen or cotton but also prime wool or raw silk fabrics.

The ornamental elements that were discreetly placed on the collar, breast, along the shoulder lines and at the end of sleeves were sewn with wool and later with coloured *strămătură*, dyed cotton, silk, metallic thread, polychrome beads and sequins.

When they were made of wool or raw silk, the straight shirts would be decorated by stripes obtained by inserting white thick cotton threads (*sacâz*) or raw silk threads in the warp. Such a cloth was called "with strips" or "with margin". When thicker threads was inserted both in warp and in filling, a material woven in *candrel* or in *lacre* (squares) would be obtained.

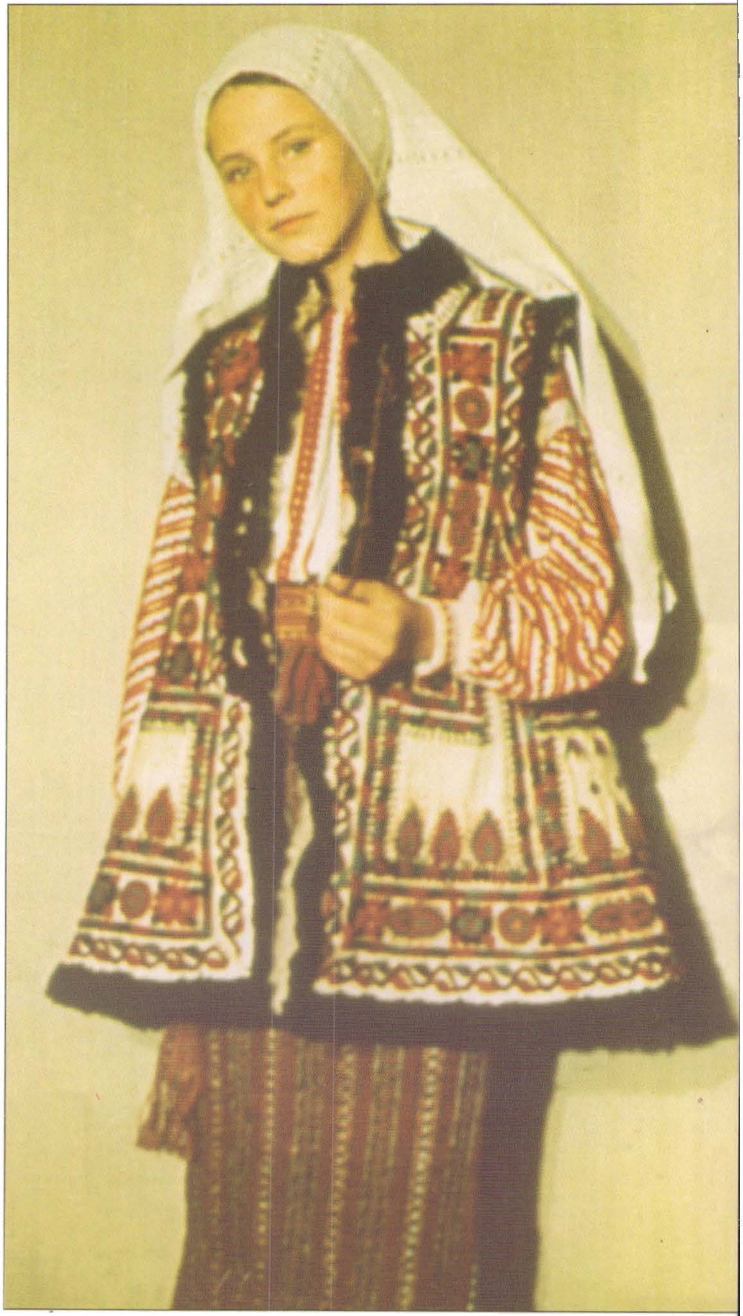
The prime wool or raw silk shirt would also be ornamented by patterning it with symbolic and geometric motives among which the lozenge (solar symbol) and the little fir tree (symbolizing the tree of life) were predominant.

The little keys and the needle-made lace (*cheiţe* and *ajur*) were frequently used for this type of shirt, amplifying its aesthetic valences. A special decorative effect was created by the *bibiluri* (needle made little triangles) and the *zăfşori* (festoon) that adorned the neck of the shirt and the hems of the sleeve ends and laps.

A defining piece for the female folk costume is the *fotă*, locally known as *catrinţă*. The term *catrinţă* was general in Moldavia on the left side of the Prut, proving thus the unity of the costume within the Romanian ethnic space.

In the medieval age, the *fotă* was included in the court and town costumes in Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, which demonstrates the continuity of this costume element in the Romanian traditional clothing of different social categories.

The terms *futā* or *fotă* frequently appear in a series of documents in the 16th century, referring to a costume piece made of a striped fabric of oriental origin.[36]



Traditional costume from the Bacău area

The *fotă* has evolved continuously in the Moldavian space, from the first unornamented form that was frequent at work and during mourning periods to the *fotă* ornamented by two red or dark red horizontal bands (each band, called *bată*, was framed by coloured narrow streaks with names and numbers varying from one village to another).

The next stage in the evolution of the decoration was that of the polychrome streaks (called *vrâste* or

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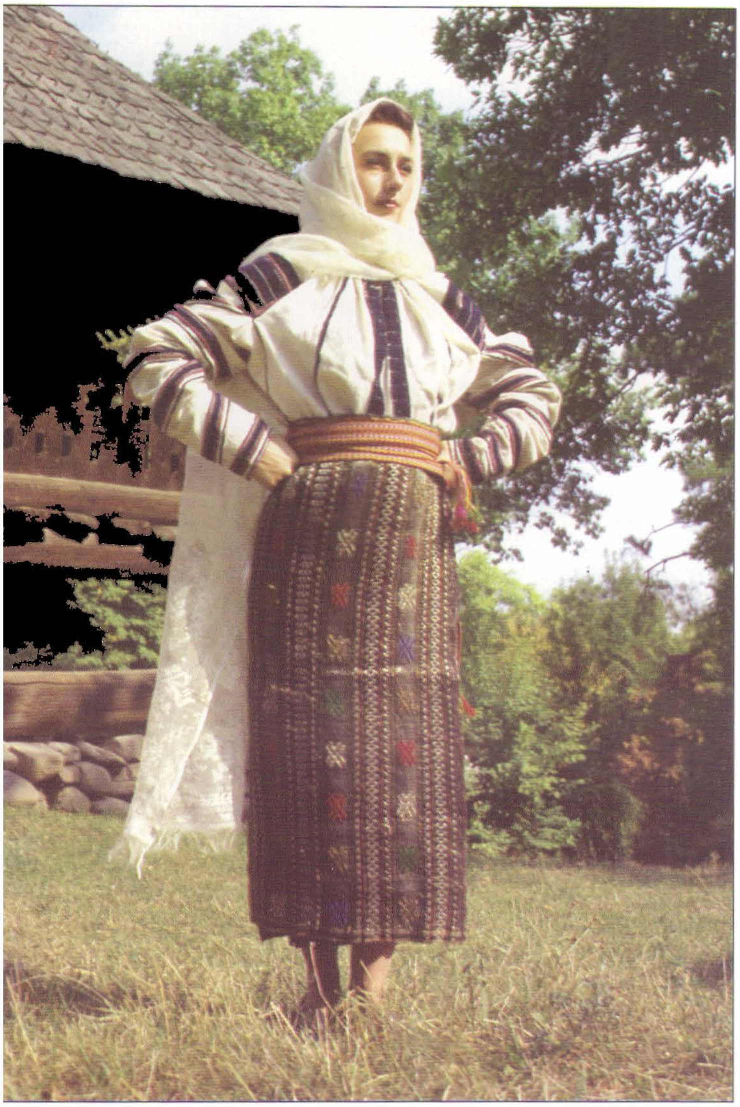
[36] Corina Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului de curte în Ţările Române* (*History of the Court Costume in the Romanian Principalities*), p. 161.



Folk costume composed of ***maramă****, shirt with twisted sleeves and* ***fotă*** *(the Vrancea district)*

genuţe), placed vertically, one near the other, at the extremities of the *fotă* or placed in a suite of groups of streaks symmetrically arranged and coloured (called *skipped-sărite*). The density of streaks, their width and chromatics constituted an indication of the age and the village of a woman. The black unornamented space between the streaks was called *scaune* - *chairs* in the north of Moldavia, on both sides of the Prut.

The streaked *fote* in Bessarabie are analogous to those in the zones Suceava, Câmpulung Moldovenesc, the Dorne Basin, the Bistriţa Valley, and Vrancea.

On the Prut Valley, in the Botoşani zone, women would wear *fote* with dark blue background, ornamented at the ends by two wide red stripes and along the hips by two vertical red stripes. A few narrow white stripes cross the red background on the laps.[37]

In the north of Bessarabie, the 90 and 100-year old women that I interviewed during a field research conducted between 1992 and 1996[38] remembered that their mothers and grandmothers would wear two variants of *fote*: the festive *fotă* and the daily work *catrinţă*. The differences between the two variants lie in the material used and in the ornamentation manner.

The festive variant has many similarities with the *fotă* in the Botoşani area as it is composed of the same two chromatic fields: the upper dark blue field and the lower red one ornamented also with horizontal white stripes. The *fotă* specific to the north zone of Bessarabie also has red bands vertically placed along the margins and the vertical stripes along the hips.

Another step in the evolution of the *fotă* was the variant with simple vertical stripes intercalated with patterns woven with coloured *strămătură* and tinsel and placed in parallel with the groups of stripes to enhance the decorative effect of the piece. The wider and more discreetly ornamented the back piece (called "inside"), the older the *fotă*.

Initially, the *fote* were made by *hair* (the best quality wool) for the warp and wool for the filling, and they were woven in looms in the technique of the four threads. Later they would also be made of different materials (cotton, soft wool, metallic thread and silk).

Women in Răcăciuni (Siret Valley) used to wear a variant of the *fotă* called *catrinţă aleasă* or *peşteman* that was woven in the technique of the two threads with a dark blue or black background and quite a rich decoration composed of vertical patterned bands the ends of the piece and horizontal patterned bands (*gâţar*) on the laps, covering also the back of the piece. Extremely sumptuous, the costume of Răcăciuni was completed by the yellow raw silk head kerchief, impressive by its size and by the rich patterned ornamentation woven with white thread on its whole surface. Another specific costume piece was the straight shirt made of yellow raw silk (entirely or only the breast) with sleeves of cotton cloth, patterned with beads, sequins and dyed cotton.

Equally priced in the traditional community was the patterned skirt (*androc*) with ceremonial function as it was included in the obligatory clothing of the godmother and the bride.

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[37] Angela Paveliuc-Olariu, *Arta populară din zona Botoşanilor. Portul popular* (*The Folk Art in the Botoşani Area. Folk Clothing*), p. 18.

[38] Maria Bâtcă, *Dimensiunile spirituale ale Basarabiei* (*The Spiritual Dimensions of Bessarabie*), p. 156.

We should also mention the specific costume of the Roman-Catholic community settled in the villages along the Siret River banks. According to the data provided by the well-known ethnologist Ion H. Ciubotaru in the first volume of his trilogy *Catolicii din Moldova* (*The Catholics in Moldavia*)[39], the catholic Romanians (*ceangăi*) wear costumes that preserve the morphological and decorative structure of the old Romanian folk costumes, which certifies their Romanian origin and identity.

From the end of the 19th century on, the costume in the Moldavian space included the creased or pleated skirt decorated by streaks and polychrome patterns or by rhomboidal motives (*ozoare*) obtained by the technique *neveditură*.

Traditionally, men would wear round hats with large turned up rims (called "hats with *gang*" in Bucovina – north of Moldavia). Quite frequently, they would also cover their heads by caps made of black, white or grey lamb fur caps, round (*rotate*) or high (*ţurcăneşti*).

The typical male shirt was the knee-long straight shirt (*cămeşoi*), with narrow collar, straight around the neck, buttoned by thread laces, with the sleeves attached to the shoulder lines, large and loose or tightened by "bracelets" (cuffs), with lateral gores and *pave* under the armpits. The cloth sheets of the shirt would be seamed by decorative white and yellow *cheiţe*. The shirt was decorated by geometrical or stylized vegetal motives sewn with coloured soft wool and cotton thread and tinsel on the collar, breast, sleeves and laps. The festive shirts were ornamented by drawn threads and needle-made lace made with white cotton thread. In the zones Botoşani, Neamţ, Iaşi, Vaslui and Galaţi,

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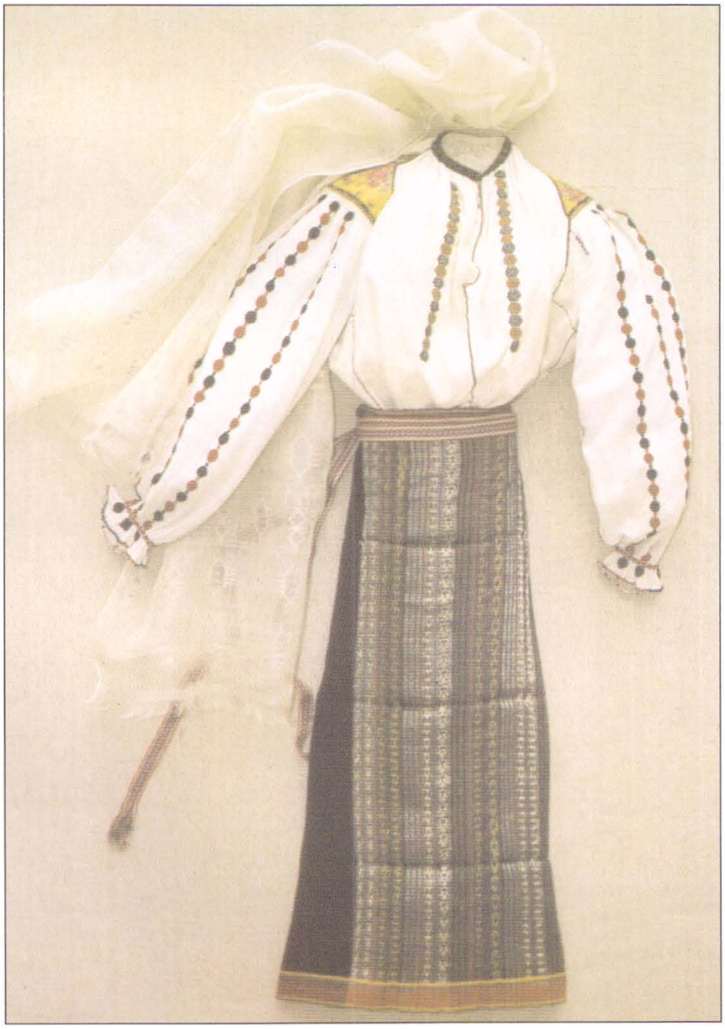
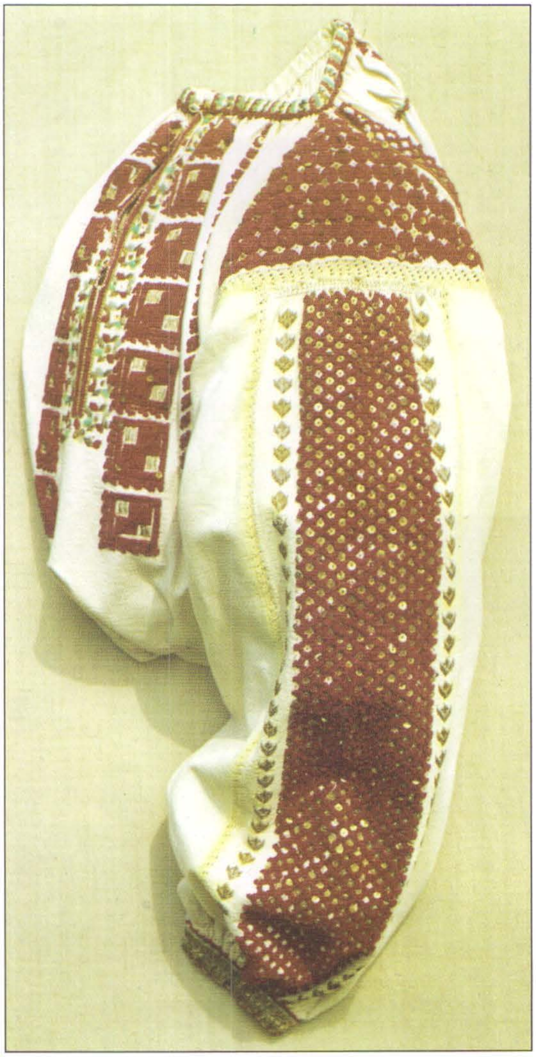
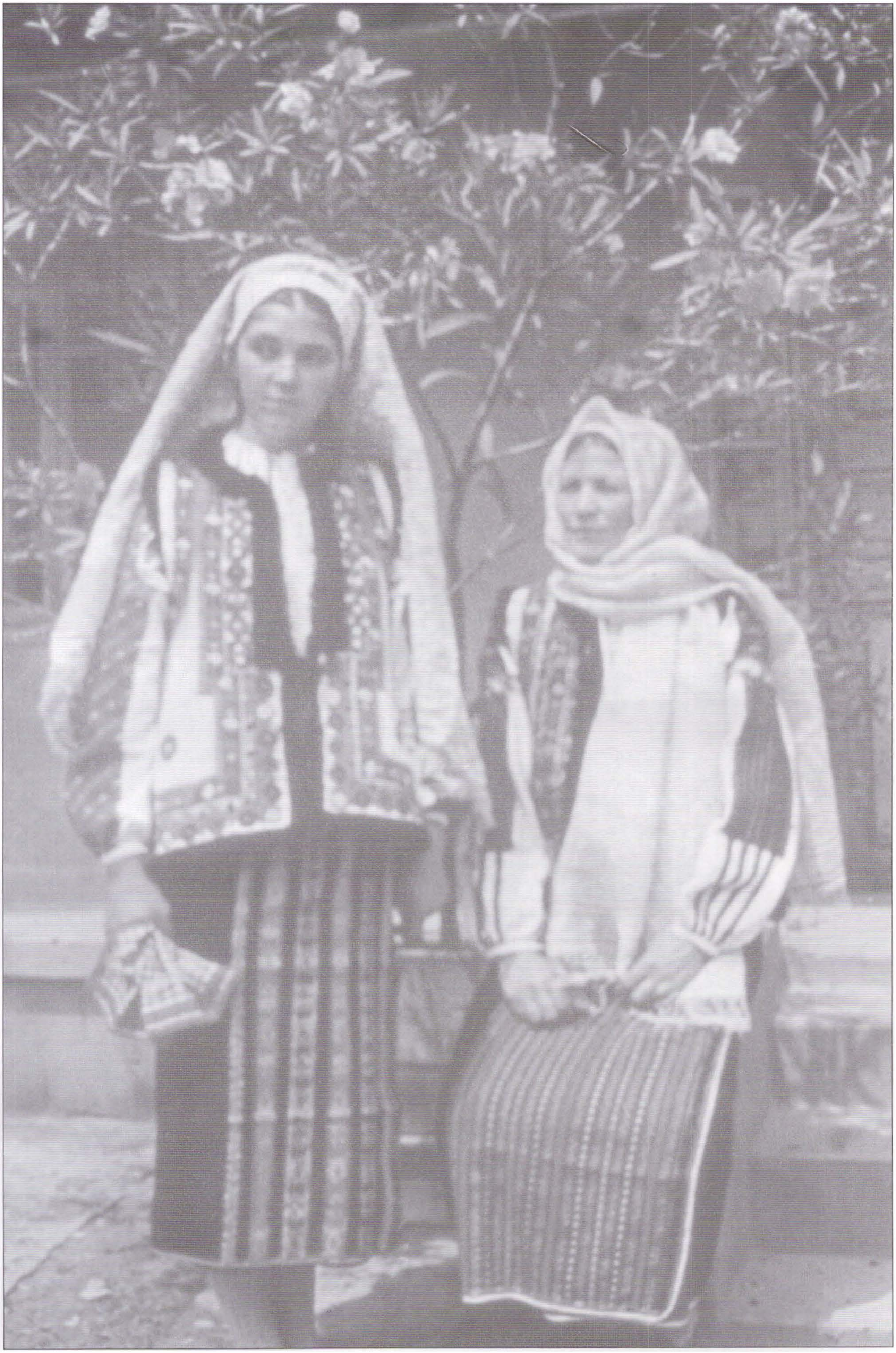
[39] Angela Paveliuc-Olariu, *Arta populară din zona Botoşanilor. Portul popular* (*The Folk Art in the Botoşani Area. Folk Clothing*), p. 24.

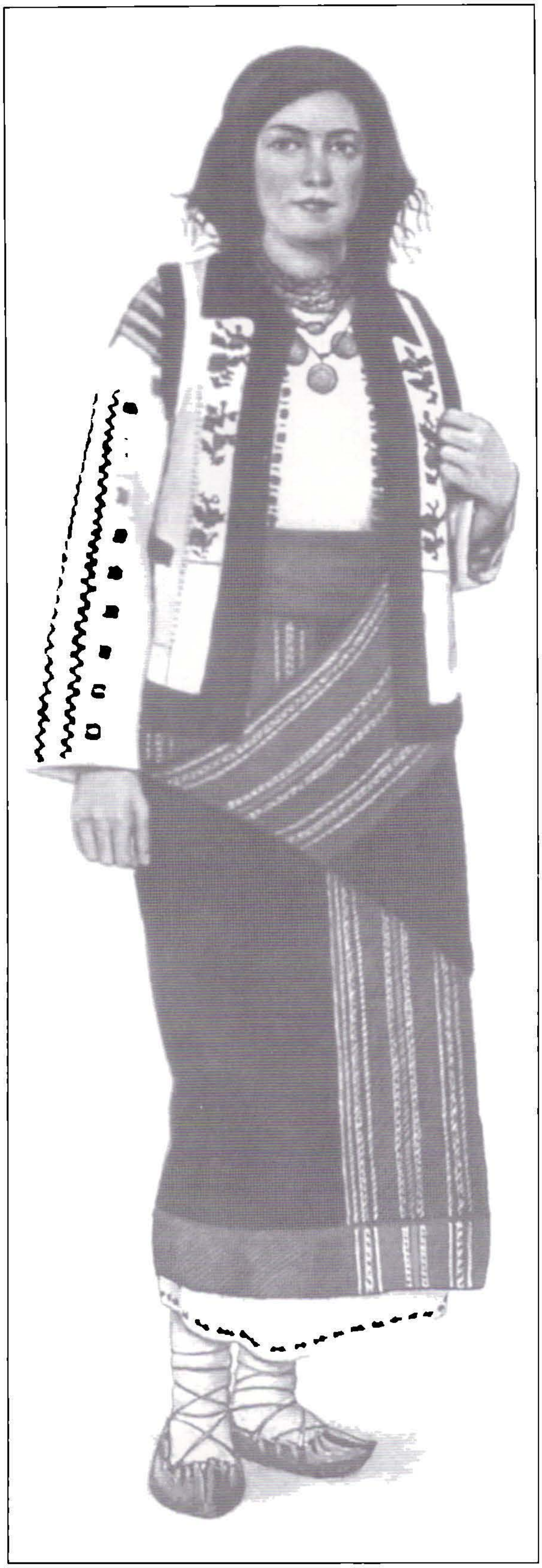


Folk costume:
maramă**, shirt with **chiruşcă** and **fotă



*Shirt with **chiruşcă** from Vrancea*





Folk costume from southern Bessarabie

←

Traditional Csango clothing from the Bacău area (pages 172-173)

shirts were also made of prime wool or raw silk and they were ornamented by woven streaks or squares (*lacre*). The use of beads and sequins to ornament the raw silk shirts created special artistic effect. The large shirt of prime wool was part of the festive clothing indicating distinctly the social status of a person.

The most spread festive costume for young men included the shirt with richly decorated skirt.

The winter trousers (*berneveci* or *cioareci*) were made of white or black thickened frieze woven in the technique of the four threads; they were tight on the legs and creased from knees to ankles.

The *iţari* for the warm season would be made of a cloth woven in the technique of the four threads of thinly spun unprocessed wool or of cotton warp and prime wool filling; they were also tight on the legs and creased from knees to ankles. The functional criterion explains the model of the *iţari* with 101 pleats and a length of two metres that were worn in the Botoşani area.

The cloth trousers had a similar cut with that of the *iţari*. The oldest type of *iţari* (called *iţari without front*) was preserved in the zone Vrancea. At this type the gores were placed in such a way that the front and the back of the piece were identical.

The common footwear was the *opincă* worn with leggings of white frieze (*sumani*). On holidays or at fairs, men and women alike would wear high boots with laces or calf leather boots (*ciubote*) ornamented on the upper parts with floral elements sewn with leather strands.

Among the winter coats, the waistcoats and sheepskin coats were very frequent. They were richly decorated and bordered with common fur on working days and quality fur trimmings (polecat, marten) on holidays.

Documents of the feudal age attest the existence of numerous furrier workshops on the royal or church estates. The raft of decorating fur coats flourished especially in the second half of the 19th century when big centres were formed and entire villages got specialized in the furriery. The most renown of these centres was that of Ghindăoani (Neamţ zone).

The waistcoats of Ghindăoani can be considered true emblems of the folk costume of Neamţ. It is remarkable that every generation of furrier craftsmen contributed to the enriching of the decorations and chromatic range, adding their sense of beauty and inventiveness to turn their craft into art.

While the decoration of the 19th century coats was spaced and placed only at the borders, in time it got to cover the whole piece by decorative ranges separated by cord lines and crosses. The replacement of the black artificial fur (*prim*) with the grey one enhanced the decorative effect of the composition.

The manner of alternating the decorative ranges, the techniques employed as well as the selected colour shades turn each piece into a unique plastic creation. The geometric ornamental motives: straight line, semicircle, circle, lozenge, alternate with the zoomorphic motives (fleas, serpent – *şarpalac*, feathers – *peniţe*) but mostly with vegetal motives (rose, bud, shamrock leaf, fern, oak, fir tree, pansy etc.) sewn with polychrome soft wool. The decorative motive specific for the Ghindăoani centre was the rose (*ruja*) – a flower with 7-10 petals inscribed in a circle and associated with leaved branches or flowers with stem that suggest the ancient motive of the tree of life. The sewn up waistcoat, sewn on the left shoulder and under the armpit (called *boandă* in Bucovina) was richly adorned by floral embroidery, bordered by marten fur trimmings around the neck and shoulders and it was a ceremonial costume piece for bridegrooms.

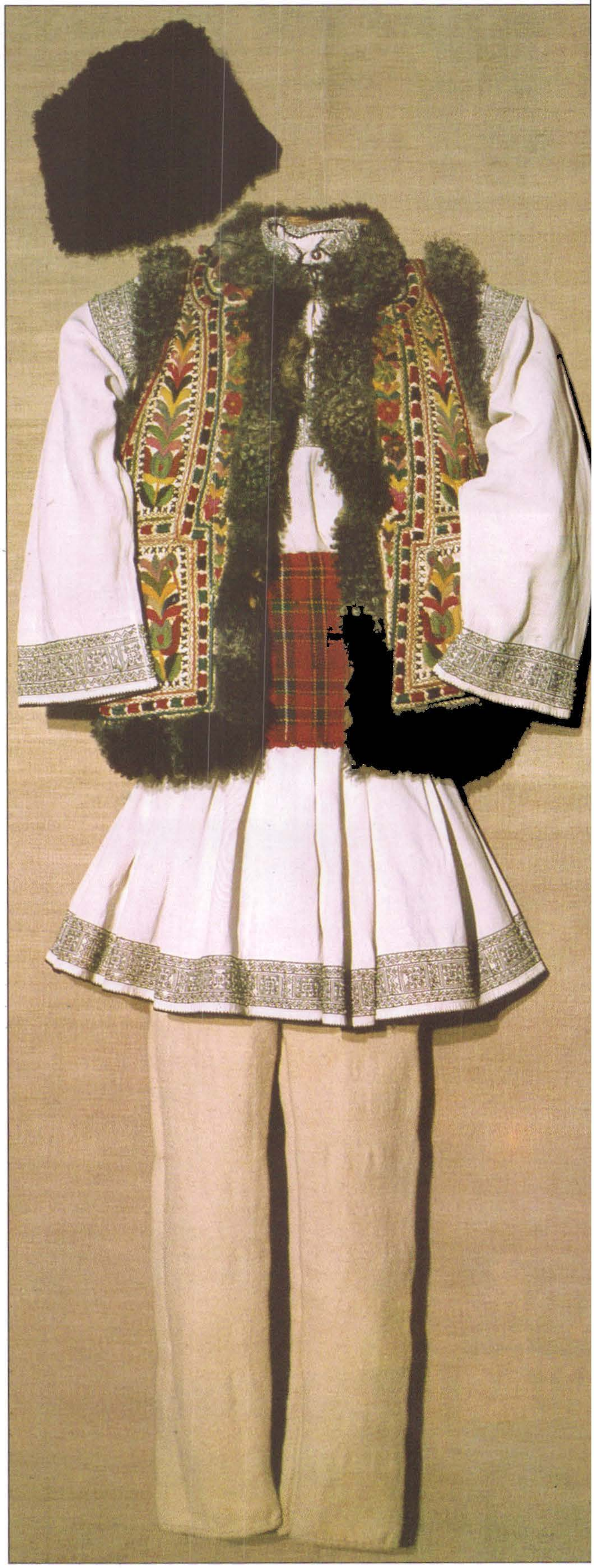
Another representative piece for the folk costume in Bucovina was the waistcoat (*cheptar*) with girdle and laps which can be considered a major achievement of the folk art in the zone Rădăuţi. It was very elegant with its flaring laps, delicate and refined embroideries sewn on the breast and around the waistline (as a girdle called *bârnaş*, framed above and below by different motives: straight lines, points, zigzags and entwined vegetal elements forming leaved stalks, sewn with red, black, yellow and green soft wool thread) and with the yellow-dyed marten fur trimmings bordering its sides.

The waistcoat with girdle and laps that used to be part of both male and female costumes became a festive female coat in the 20th century and it constituted one of the most priced costume pieces in the area until the First World War.

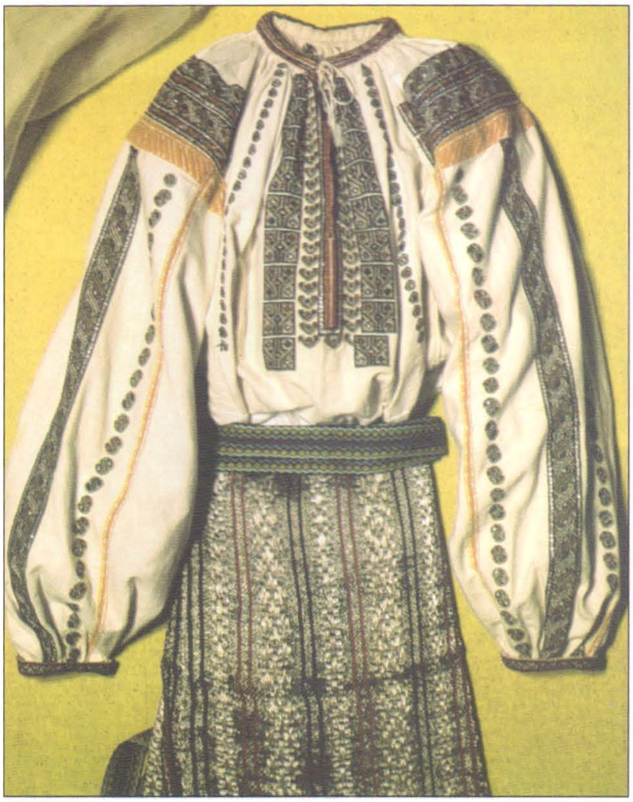
The sheepskin coat with girdle and laps had the same cut and similar decoration to that of the waistcoat, only the waistcoat was sleeveless while the sheepskin coat (made of up to seven sheep skins) had sleeves. The waistcoat and the sheepskin coat with girdle and laps were extremely expensive and besides their practical function they also had an ornamental-decorative one as they were worn on special occasions in the life of rural communities.

The craftsmen in Moldavia specialized in making winter coats as early as the 15th century, according to documents of the royal chancellery.

The numerous peasant installations of processing wool cloth – the fulling mills for *sumani* – and the existence of



Folk costume: cap, shirt, girdle, trousers and waistcoat from Ghindăoani (Neamţ)



Traditional Vrancea costume

specialized craftsmen for making frieze coats are proof enough for the antiquity and continuity of this craft in Moldavia.

A famous centre for the craft of making and ornamenting frieze coats was in Humuleşti (Neamţ district), a village that provided frieze and ready-made *sumane* for many fairs in Moldavia.

The *suman* was made of thickened wool cloth either keeping its natural colour (white, black, grey) or dyed in black (with a concoction of alder bark, wild marjoram and copperas) or brown (with walnut shells) and by its large dimensions conferred a statuary aspect to those who wore it.

People of upper classes in the Moldavia on the left side of the Prut River would wear *sumane* made of *şiac*, a very fine industrial cloth.

The *suman* was cut as a straight tunic, having a straight collar and body and with sleeves made of rectangular pieces of material. To make it ampler, the craftsmen added the gores, at first straight gores and later triangular ones with the sharp angle under the armpit. The specific *suman* for the whole Moldavia was the one with rectangular gores under the armpits and gores on the front.

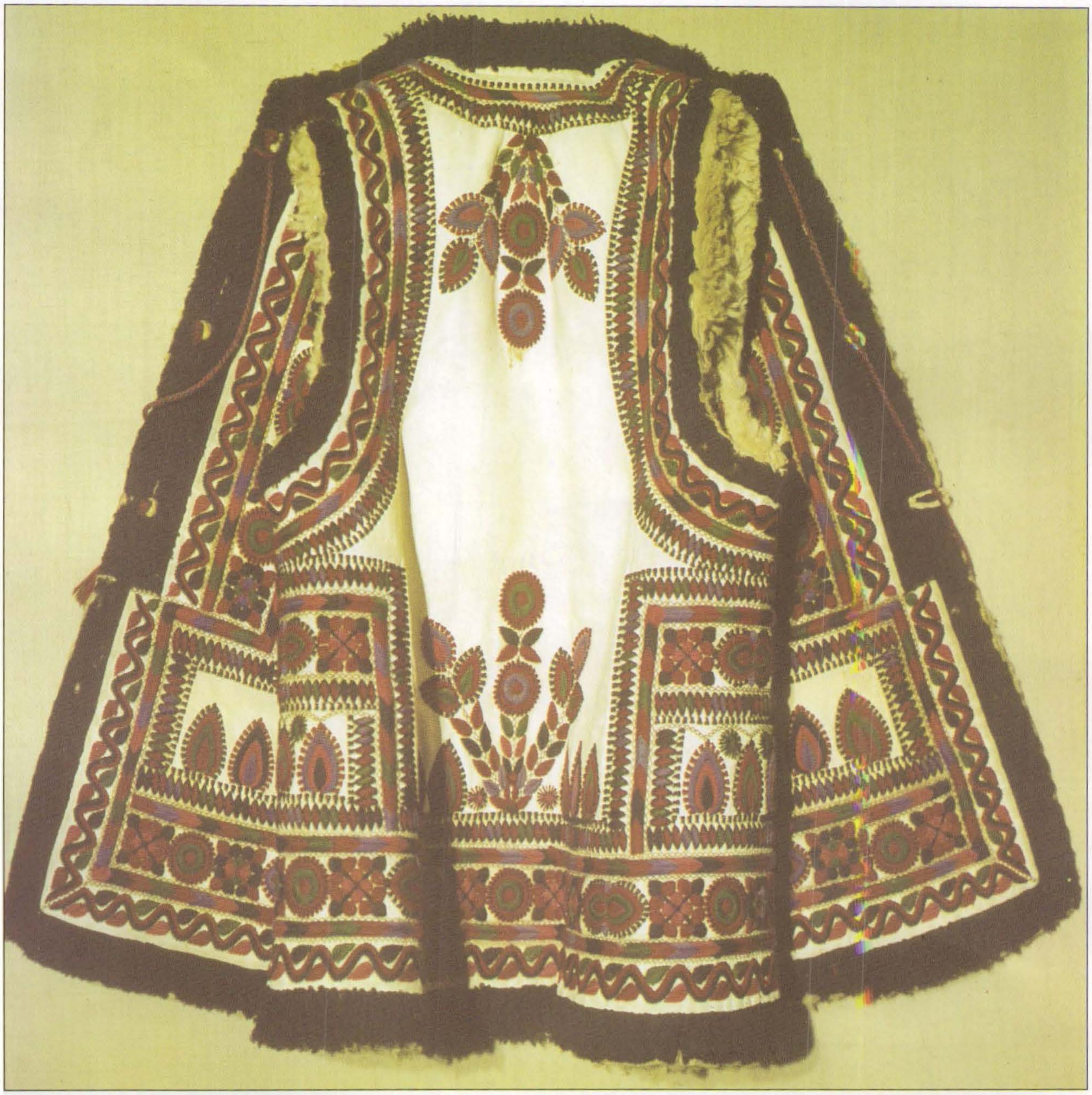
The flaring cut gave the *suman* its elegance that was enhanced by the decoration with black *sarad*, only one zone (Roman) being characterized by decorations with red *sarad.*

The ornament called *sarad* could be combined in different manners according to the inventiveness and skill of the craftsman who devised geometrical elements (zig-zag, eight, meandering lines, waves called *cepreag* or *zgărdiţă*) or stylized vegetal motives to ornament the collar, sleeves, pockets, laps and rims of the lateral gores. The ornamentation realized by using the *sarad* was highly refined, especially when the chromatic nuances were in the same range.

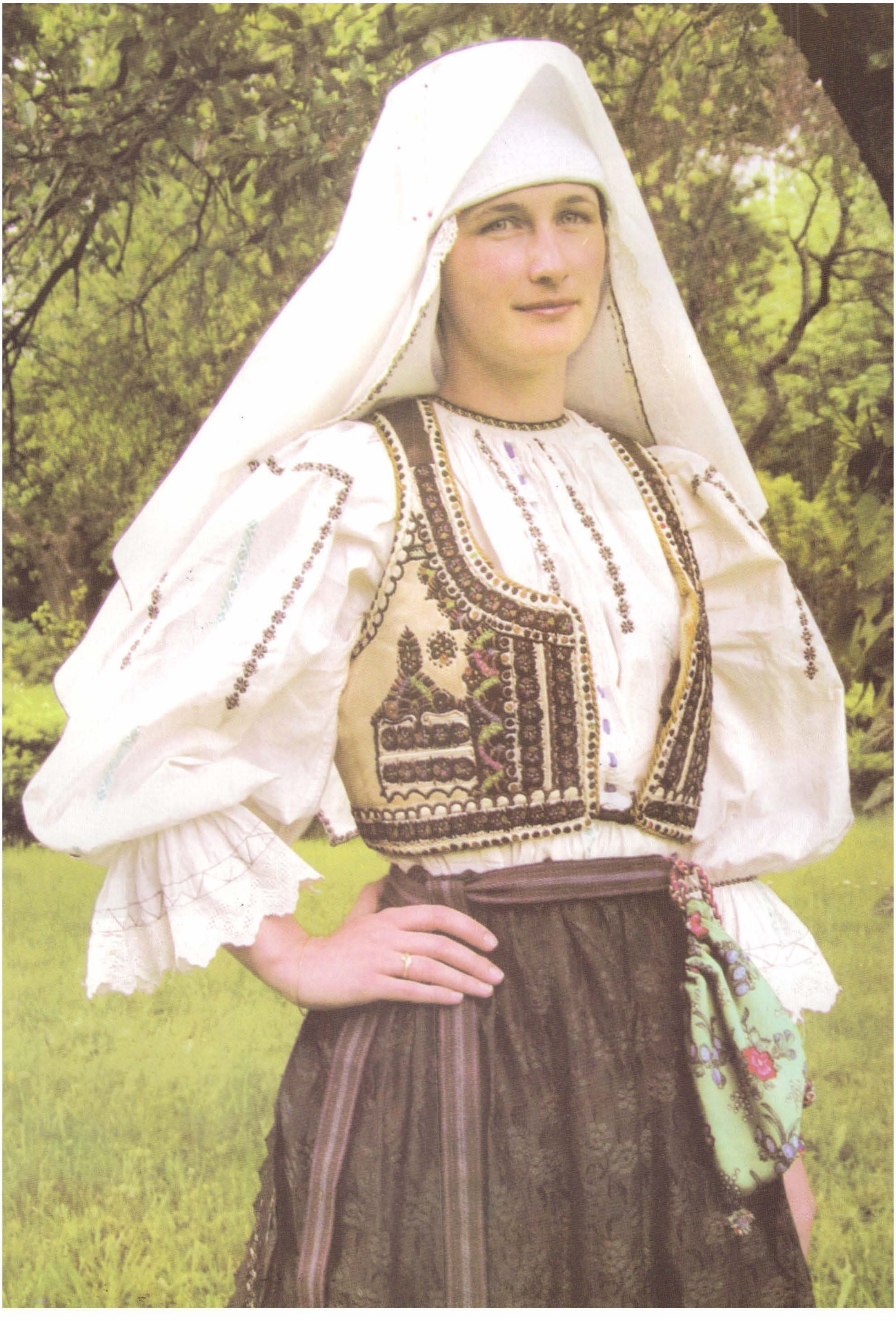
Brides and bridegrooms would wear white *sumane* adorned by woollen black strings applied sometimes in two or three rows and creating a powerful contrast between background and ornamentation.

The *mantle* customary in the north of Moldavia was cut according an archaic technique, with lateral gores made of rectangular sheets. The mantle had hood or "lid" and it was cut of black, white or grey *sumani*; it was ankle long and could be worn by men and women alike. Its decoration was composed of red, black, blue, yellow or brown *sarad*, embroideries sewn with polychrome soft wool thread and applied pieces of coloured cloth or velvet sewn with flowers placed predominantly on the hood, collar and breast. The hood of the mantle, which looked like a rectangular collar provided with buttonholes and buttons at the corners, was the most ornamented part of the mantle. People wore mantles especially when they went away for a long time and they would draw the hood back on good weather and wear it on the head on rainy days or freeze.

The successive generations of people belonging to folk communities have preserved the authentic structure of the folk costume meant to honour the person who would wear it and to brighten the joy of the holidays.



Waistcoat specific to the Bacău area



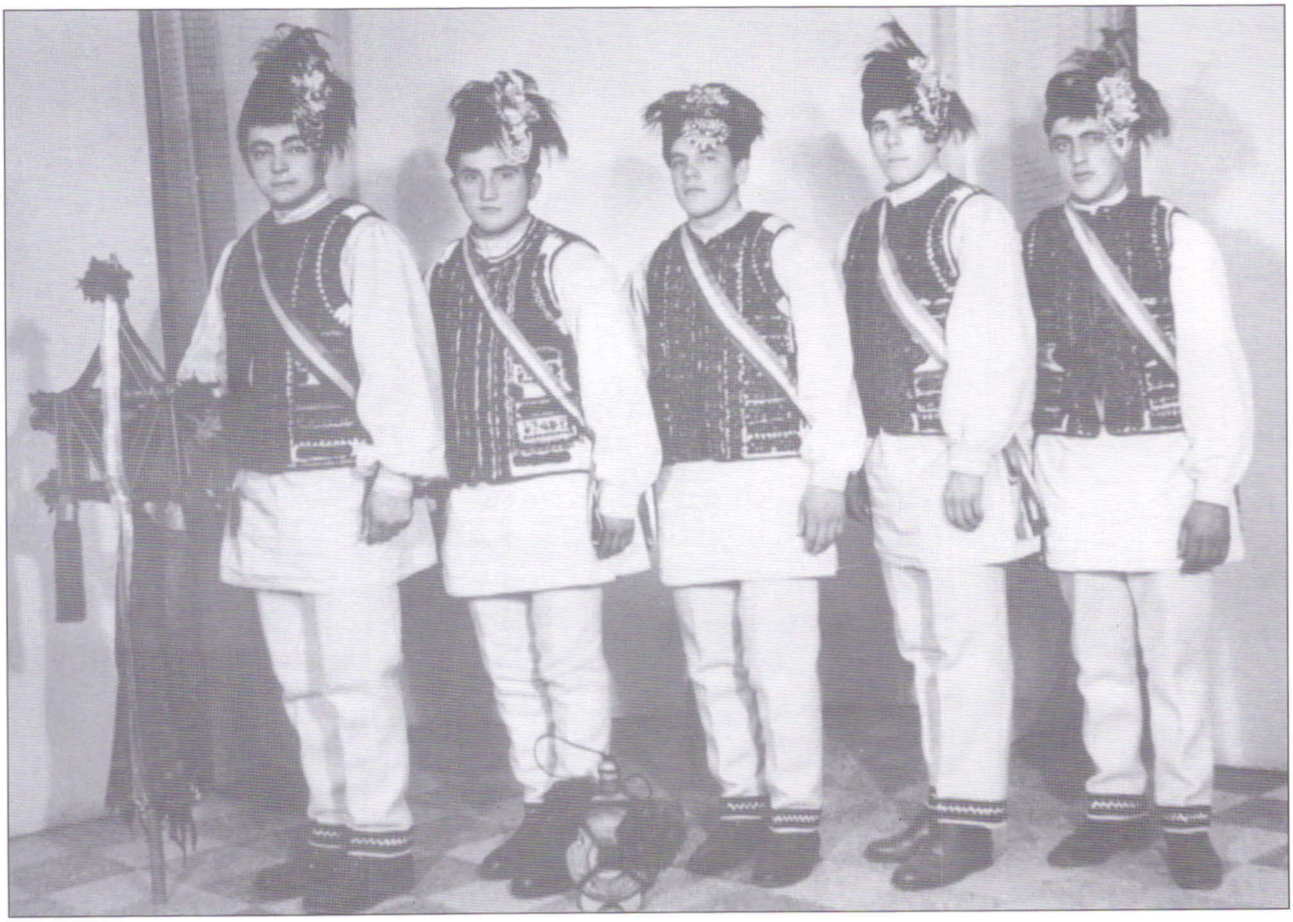
Functions and meanings of the Romanian folk costume

The traditional rural community constituted a social structure made of small micro-units assembled in extremely complex relations based on criteria of gender, occupation, social class inclusion etc.

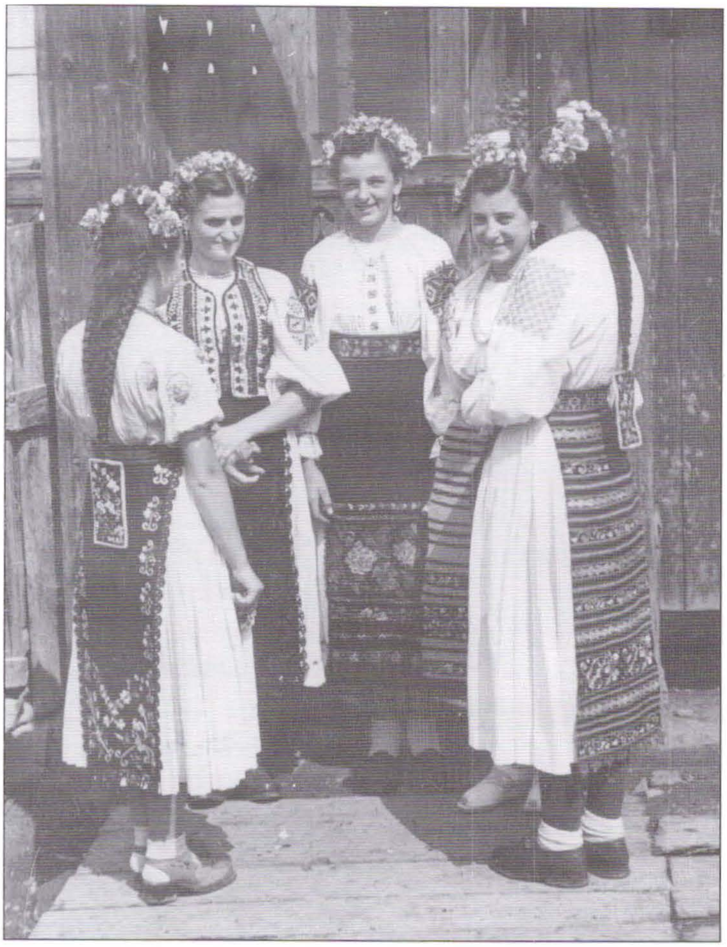
All sides of the social activity of a community were integrated into this system of interdependent units that ensured the social cohesion and continuity. The pressure of the social environment upon individuals was extremely powerful concerning the degree of conformity to "models" - certain behavioural programs instituted by the community. The relationship between individuals and their social environment was defined by a series of actions that marked the passing of the persons from one state to another. Each stage of life – childhood, adolescence, maturity and old age – had its distinctive clothing marks according to traditional provisions that an individual had to accept totally in order to get integrated into the group.

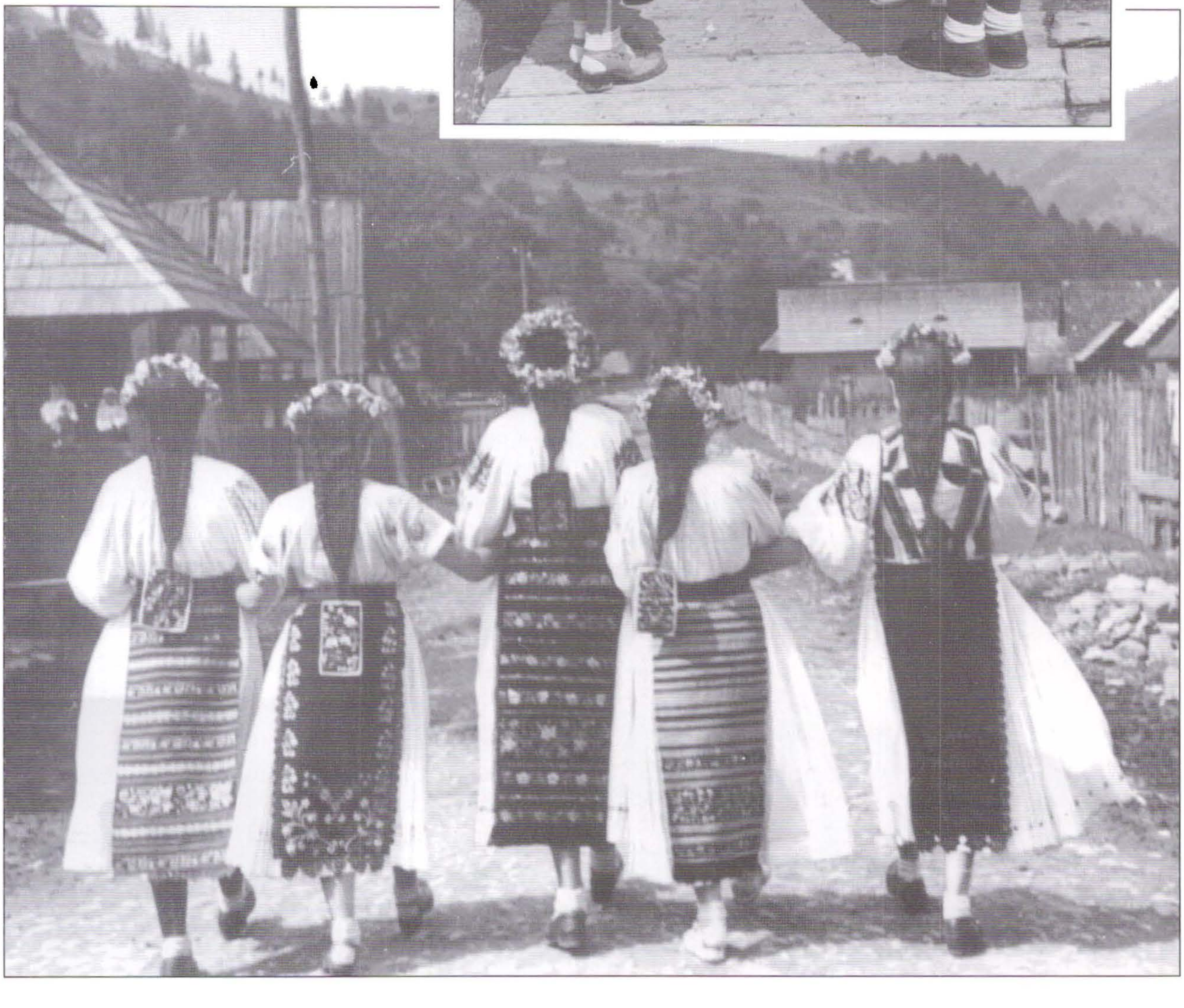
← *Bride from Bohol‚ with a "wife's" head cover*

Ages were considered distinct categories within folk communities and the transition from one age to another would be marked by a series of ceremonial acts and by adequate garments that communicated information acknowledged and accepted by all the members of a certain group. To be valid, these ceremonial acts should have been approved of by the entire community as everybody would take part in these acts.



Young men's group from Drăguş (Land of Făgăraş)





Each age level had its symbolic code that ensured its identification and acknowledgement by the insiders. The distinct costume elements for each age category were settled by tradition, beginning with the headdress and going on to the decoration and chromatics of each piece and to the attributing of certain costume pieces only to people within a specific age group that had also to adopt appropriate attitudes and language. The appropriate ways to dress, to behave and to act were so distinct for each age level that we could speak of an age-related traditional symbolic system.

As the sociologist Traian Herseni points out, "the social life in all its evolutionary stages goes beyond the familial frame of biologic origin and the gender relationships and it is constituted on the basis of the sympathetic relations created between people of the same sex and age".[1]

On winter holidays, the entire village community marked the passing from one age category to another.

The young men's group (*ceata*) functioned as a traditional institution with powerful social functions among which there was the function of "putting the young girls in the dance".

The young men's group was formed on St. Nicholas' day, when the most handsome, prestigious, good dancers and singers were selected among the eligible young men in the village.

To distinguish themselves from others, the members of the young men's group would wear certain distinctive signs. They would put on festive clothes, with hats or caps especially adorned by the so-called *vâstre* – decorations made of golden and red threads, peacock feathers, polychrome tassels, mirrors, cords, ivy, waxed multicoloured flowers, coloured ribbons etc. The young men in the group would also wear coloured or three-coloured bands diagonally placed over the breast of the richly adorned waistcoats.

The introduction of teenager girls to the round dance was an important moment because it marked their passing to another age category with specific marks and they acquired the status of maids.

Parents would wait for the "joining in the dance" of their daughters with emotion and joy, as that was a special moment when the teenage girls would be acknowledged publicly as maids eligible for marriage.

The standard that constituted the distinctive mark of each young men's group was adorned (in a similar way to that of adorning the wedding standard) by coloured head kerchiefs, ribbons, *bete*, artificial flowers, small green branches, bells etc. Young men would take their standard along and danced keeping it high and watching it fiercely lest young men in other groups should steal it.

The leader of the young men's group and of the Christmas dance was called *armaş* (weapon bearer) in Tohanu Nou (Braşov). He would keep in his hand a reed stick ornamented by multicoloured ribbons which the girls would grasp when they danced. On Christmas Eve and on the first and second day of Christmas, the young men in the group invite the appropriate girls to join in the dance.[2]

The girls whom the young men thought appropriate to enter the group of maidens would join in the dance at Tohanu Nou on the second Christmas day, when the round dance would be organized in the centre of the village. When the *armaş* ordered, they were raised on arms three times, as a token of their importance at that time.

After the ceremonial of joining in the dance was completed, the *armaş* took the girls in the so-called *Brează*, a dance where five girls would enter holding to his reed stick with their left hands.[3]

The round dance was organized in the centre of the village and lasted about two hours after which the group would go to a previously selected host and they would continue the party until dawn. There was an Easter custom according to which girls had to offer the most beautiful painted eggs to the young men who had danced with them at Christmas, as a token of gratitude.

The same custom of introducing the young girls to the dance was also observed in the commune Arpaşu de Jos (Sibiu district), where all the girls who were to dance during the Christmas holidays were initiated in the common dance on St. Nicholas' Day.[4]

The young men's group in the village Recea (Land of Făgăraş) used to organize the custom of going from house to house singing folk Christmas songs, organizing the dance and "putting the girls in the dance". The members of the group would wear *vaster* sewn on their black caps and made of waxed multicoloured flowers, mirrors and peacock feathers. They would wear festive

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Group from Maramureş (page 180)

Girls from the Năsăud area during a folk celebration (page 181) costumes made of shirt with laps and *ştrafuri* (*pleats*) on the breast, wide belts (*şerpare*) of stapled leather or sewn with motives or girdles of *strămătură*, sewn up waistcoats embroidered with soft wool or dyed cotton thread, white frieze *cioareci*, leather high boots or army boots and as overcoats fleecy *sarici* or cloth *recăle*. Over their waistcoats they would wear three-coloured bands fixed diagonally.[5]

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[1] Traian Herseni, *Drăguş, un sat din Ţara Oltului – Făgăraş* (*Drăguş, a Village the Land of Olt – Făgăraş*), p. 71.

[2] *** Muzeul Etnografic al Ardealului (*The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania*), Archive no. 451, 1941.

[3] *Ibidem.*

[4] *** Muzeul Etnografic al Ardealului (*The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania*), Archive no. 456, 1948.

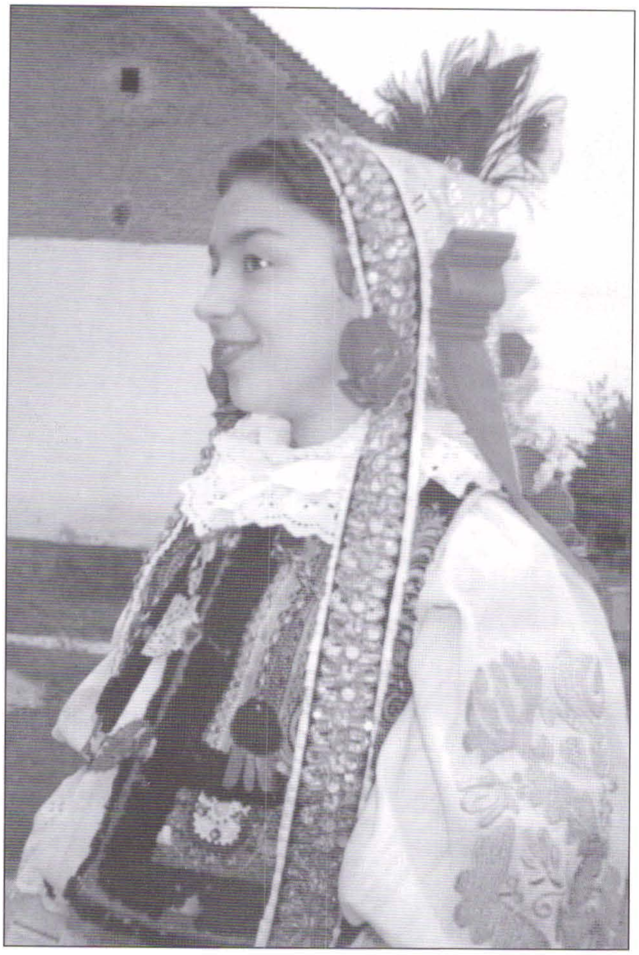
The fur coats (waistcoats and sheepskin coats) as well as the homespun cloth coats and the *şerpar* or the woollen girdle had a special significance within the traditional community, as the young men wore them for the first time at their first dance. That way, they would pass to another stage of life, entering the group of the "big boys" and integrating into the social life of the community by fulfilling the tasks attributed to their age category: they became part of the young men's group, organized the dances, the Christmas going from house to house singing winter solstice songs, the introduction of the girls into the dance etc.[6]

Within a larger frame of peasant spirituality, the sheepskin coat or the *suman* had even deeper significance. For example, in the Bihor district, a young man would intentionally forget his overcoat at the house of a maid. The next day, if he saw his sheepskin coat or *suman* hanging from the porch it meant that the young girl and her parents did not want him to become part of their family.[7]

At Drăguş (Land of Olt), the young men in the group would invite to dance first the girls who had already been initiated and only after that the girls who had just joined the dance. The latter would pretend to oppose, according to traditional decency and the young men had to force them to dance. When the dance started, a new girl had to duck under her partner's arm, while the boy was holding one of her fingers; unless they did that obligatory figure the girl would not be considered "put in the dance". "From then on – Traian Herseni concludes – she was considered a girl good for the dance, therefore eligible for marriage: she would dress as a "maid" and got into their group, assuming all their obligations (paying the taxes for folk music players and accepting all the invitations to dance or paying a fine instead)".[8]

The girls in Moldavia (Botoşani and Vrancea) would also join the dance on Christmas holidays.[9]

According to the field research data I obtained during my research in the Serbian Banat in the autumn of 2004, the girls in that region would "join in the dance" since the age of 14-15 on the occasion of the great holidays (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost).



Headdress from Uzdin (Serbian Banat)

When a girl would go to the round dance wearing a hairdo with "pleats" and "mop" and a *covârlac* (an industrial golden tinsel ribbon locally called *golden burmă*) and she would put on only the front *catrinţă* over the immaculate white laps, she let the community know that she was a maid who had to be "taken to the dance".

In Uzdin, the round dance would be organized in front of the village house and strict traditional rules would be observed. The first to dance were the men

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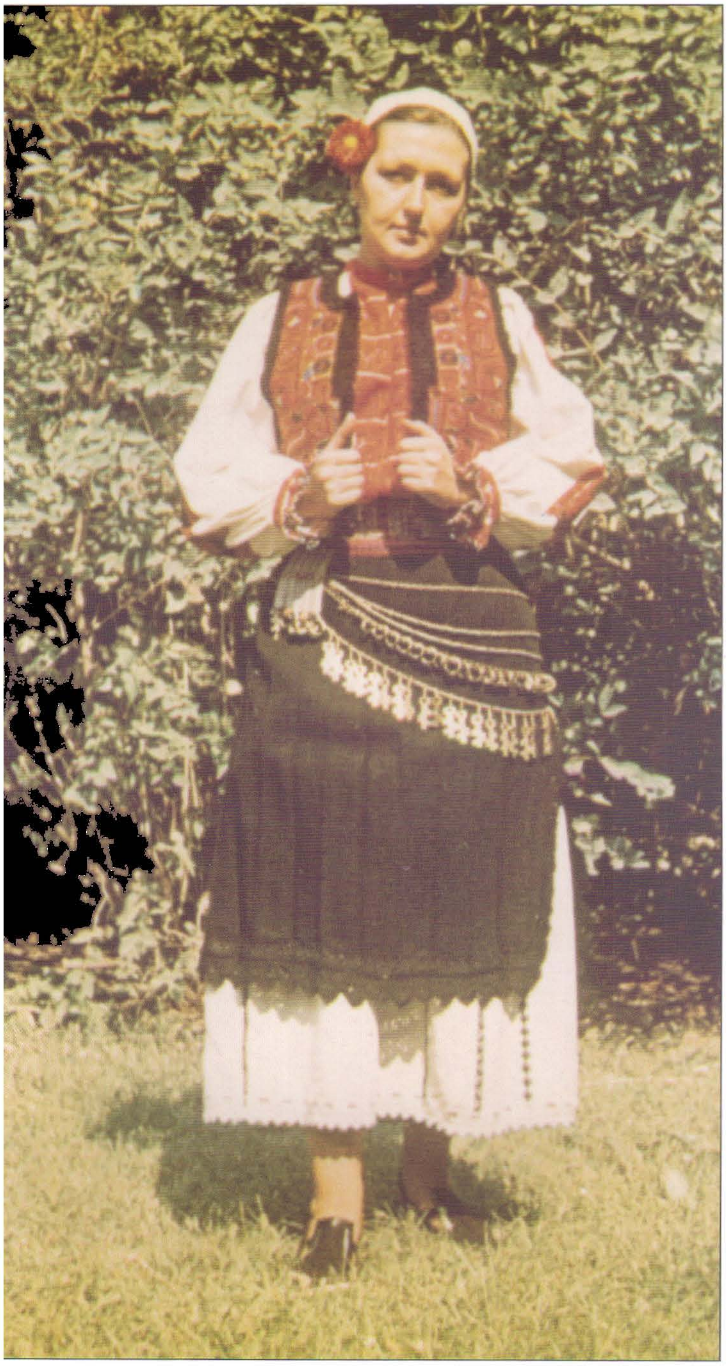
[5] C. Popescu, *Ceata feciorilor din satul Recea* (*The Young Men's Group of Recea Village*), p. 501.

[6] Maria Bocşe, *Mutaţii contemporane privind funcţiile şi semnificaţiile portului popular transilvănean* (*Contemporary Mutations Concerning the Functions and Significance of the Transylvanian Folk Costume*), p. 269.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 270.

[8] Traian Herseni, *Forme străvechi de cultură poporană românească* (*Ancient Forms of Romanian Folk Culture*), p. 15.

[9] Ilie Moise, *Confrerii carpatice de tineret. Ceata de feciori* (*Carpathian Brotherhoods of the Youth. The Young Men's Group*), pp. 125-126.



Woman from Pădureni wearing a festive costume

(bachelors and married men) and then the maids who were engaged (*căpărâte*) and who had the obligation of dancing only with their suitors.

The girl who danced in the round dance would hold the hand of her fiancé and only a finger of the other boy in the circle. They would dance the round dance (*hora*) and then a dance for two (*ardeleana*).

If they were not engaged, the girls were allowed to circle the round dance. They would "have a walk" about to be seen by the young men and by the potential in-laws who would select them taking into account social and economic criteria: they had to belong to a good but also rich family, the gold and silver coin necklaces that they wore indicating their status in that respect.

In Nicolinţ and Vladimirovăţ, the boy who invited a girl to the dance was a close relative of hers and she would repay him for the service with a piece of cloth for a shirt. The boy would take three steps forward, the girl would come to him, he would take her by two fingers and they would join in the dance. For the next two dances in that day, the young men who wanted to dance with the new girl had to ask permission from the boy who had introduced her. After she got engaged, the girl could dance only with her fiancé.

Therefore, the strict rules of initiation into an age category and integration into the social life of the community had to be observed in detail.

On the occasion of the first dance of their daughters, the well-off families of Voivodina could afford to hire a brass band and the players would honour them by coming to the house of the young girl where all the relatives had gathered. Then the girl, her parents and relatives would go to the dance in the accompaniment of the brass band.

The introduction of the young girls to the dance was considered a great festivity in the Serbian Banat and everybody in the village would take part in it.

On going to her first dance, the girl of Voivodina would fasten on the girdle (*brâu* or *brăcira*) for the first time. The ethnologist Maria Bocşe signaled the same custom in the village Buceava (Land of Zărand) and the girdle – among other costume pieces – constituted indeed a component of the rites of passage from one age level to another. The new girls in the dance would also wear for the first time the Venetian beads in the regions where these jewels were frequent (Bihor, Sălaj, Maramureş, Oaş, Apuseni). As well as the girdle, the rows of beads marked the integration of the teenagers into a new category and they also indicated their economic situation, as beads were very expensive and only the well-off could afford them.[10]

In the villages on the Criş valley – Pietroasa (Bihor), on the Bistra valley – Obreja and Ciuta (Banat) or in the Sălaj district (Pria, Cizer and Meseşenii de Sus) the girls would keep the ribbons with which they had adorned their hair at their first dance and they would give these ribbons for the ornamentation of their *ţov*

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[10] Maria Bocşe, *Mutaţii contemporane privind funcţiile şi semnificaţiile portului popular transilvănean* (*Contemporary Mutations Concerning the Functions and Significance of the Transylvanian Folk Costume*), p. 263.

(wedding standard) as these objects were believed to bring good luck and happiness to the future family.[11]

The passing to another stage of life - adolescence - was also reflected by the girls' hairdo, regarded with extreme care when they grew up. Before marriage, girls would walk bareheaded and their hair had to look its best as it was a natural ornament.

A girl who went to the round dance wearing a series of decorative accessories in her hair - wreaths of natural or artificial flowers, polychrome wool tassels, polychrome small beads, bone hairpins, or pins with coloured nails, bone hairpins with coloured stones, combs etc (all these elements indicating clearly to all the insiders of the community that the girl was a maid) - let the people know that from that moment on she was ready to receive marriage proposals.

The manner of arranging one's hair on certain occasions together with the entire headdress constituted a message to the community, a sophisticated language, a code of social identification and, at the same time, a zonal, ethnic, ceremonial, age and civil status mark.

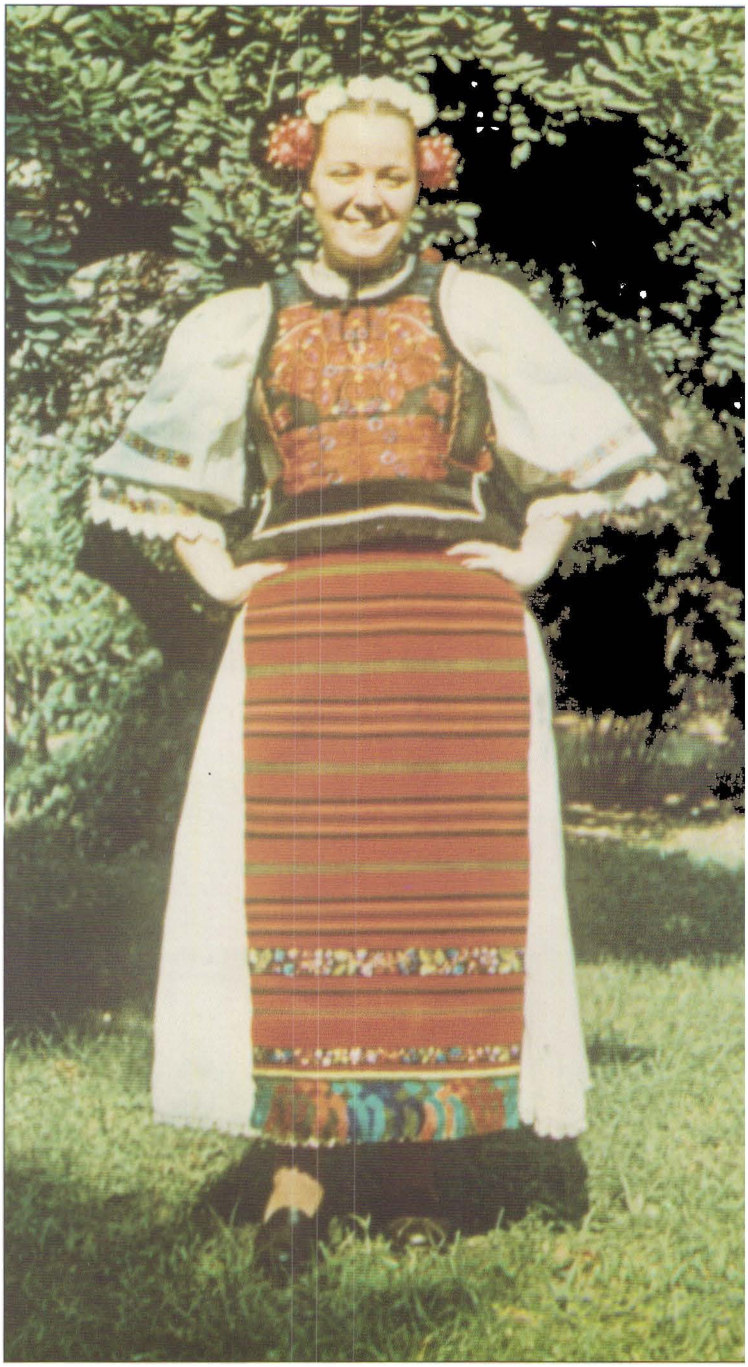
In Voivodina, the manner of braiding one's hair together with the additional ornaments and jewels indicated precisely the age level and the civil status: if the girl was a maid "taken into the dance", engaged (*căpărâtă*) or if she was newly married. Young wives would keep on wearing headdresses with some of the elements that characterized the unmarried women in the big round dance on important holidays and usually they would appear like that in public until the birth of their first child.[12]

In Şcheii Braşovului, if the girl's dowry was ready, she would go to the dance with only one plait hanging down the back and adorned by *conchiu* (flower for brides) and she would wear silk clothes.

In case her dowry was not yet ready, she would go the dance wearing two plaits and a ribbon fixed on her head by a hairpin or a rose and she would wear *androc* and cloth *laibăr*.[13]

In the commune Şanţ (Bistriţa-Năsăud district) the maid would wear her hair parted in the middle and braided in two plaits that would intertwine at the nape of the neck in a thicker plait strengthened by a long *petea* (ribbon) bought from the store and decorated by flowers and sequins.[14]

In the Năsăud zone and in the Sângeorz and Maier areas, girls would adorn their hair with *peahens* (*păuniţe*) - two circles made of black ostrich feathers and "filled" by sewn small multicoloured beads and *bumbuşte* (artificial flowers and hairpins). These *peahens* were fixed over the ears and tied at the back of



Girl from Năsăud wearing a festive costume

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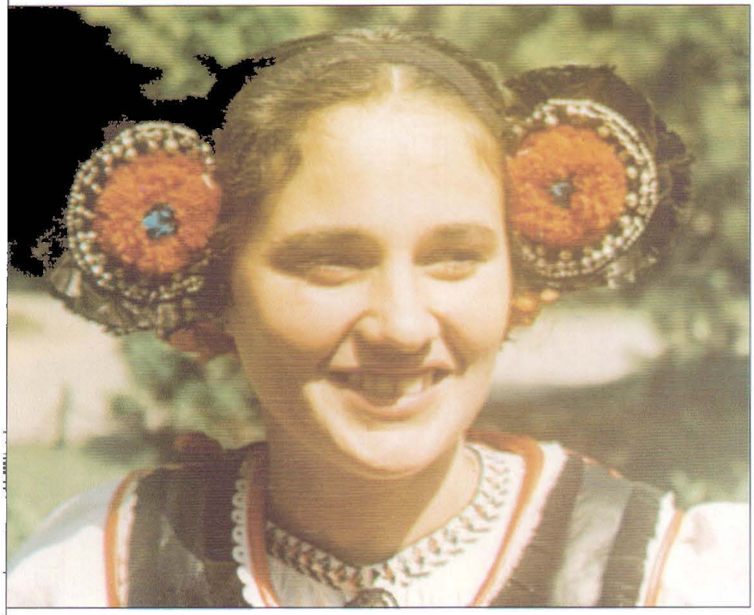
[11] Maria Bocşe, *Mutaţii contemporane privind funcţiile şi semnificaţiile portului popular transilvănean* (*Contemporary Mutations Concerning the Functions and Significance of the Transylvanian Folk Costume*), p. 264.

[12] Informer Mărioara Sârbu, aged 67, Uzdin, Voivodina.

[13] Olivia Moraru, *Contribuţii la studiul portului din Şcheii Braşovului* (*Contributions to the Study of the Costume of Şcheii Braşovului*), p. 347.

[14] Informer Maria Domide, aged 97, Şanţ, Bistriţa-Năsăud district.



Girl from Năsăud with peahens

the head with a printed ribbon of which another five or six ribbon would be fixed and let loose down the back.[15]

In the village Negrileşti (Land of Vrancea), the girls would part their hair in the middle and braid it in two plaits (locally called *gâţe*) beginning from above the ears. Then the plaits were drawn to the nape of the neck and intertwined in an oval loop named *cârcei* which was adorned with natural flowers fixed by hairpins. When they would go to the round dance, the girls would tie to their plaits the so-called *ţochi* – coloured wool balls that hang down the middle of their back.

On holidays, maidens wore a jewel named *pletari de piţigoi* (*pletari of titmouse*) made of small holed coins named *titmice* that were strung on two rows on red dyed cotton thread, fixed to the pierced ears, folded to the front and stitched to the plaits by a pin.

According to research data, this coin jewel could also be worn on the crown of the head as a diadem.

In Monor (Bistriţa-Năsăud district), on holidays, before 1918, the girls would wear *bearta* – a tronconic bonnet elongated at the back that was made of black or dark red velvet and had a cardboard support. The *beartă* was covered all over its surface by coloured beads sewn in rows and had many 40-50 centimetres long multicoloured *petele* (ribbons) hanging down at its back as a distinct symbol of maidenhood.[16]

The costume pieces could be worn only in a specific manner in conformity to local cultural norms that settled the manner and condition of using some clothes by the entitled community members.

In many zones of the country, of which we mention the Land of Olt, Vâlcea, Sălaj, but also Banat (including Voivodina), maids were not allowed to wear back *catrinţe* over the white laps but married women were obliged to wear them.

For example, in Porumbacu de Jos (Land of Olt), a maid would wear only a front *crătinţă* made of wool woven in the technique of the four threads wide enough to cover the hips and composed of two sheets sewn on the length. The piece was decorated by two patterned rows on the laps woven with yellow metallic thread (*wire*) and was ended by black tassels (*frâmbi*).

On the contrary, a married woman would wear two compulsory *catrinţe*: a wider one on the front and a narrower one at the back. The back *catrinţă* had red background and it was decorated by horizontal patterned rows placed in parallel all over the material; the front *catrinţă* had black background and it was ornamented by three patterned rows only on the laps.[17]

Girls in Viştea de Sus and in Drăguş (Land of Olt) would wear over the laps only the red front *păstură*, made of thickened frieze and ornamented by polychrome floral motives (blue, yellow, green, white) imprinted in Făgăraş with patterns on half of its surface and ended by tassels of *strămătură*. The girls did not wear back *catrinţă* while the married women wore a black one that matched the red front *păstură*.[18]

In the Meseş zone (Sălaj district), girls – unlike married women – would wear only a wool front *zadie* and that custom was in use until the end of the 19th century.[19]

The clothing rules settled by tradition required that the girls in Uzdin (Voivodina) should wear shirt, laps and only front *catrinţă*.

In Satulung (Săcele zone), a girl would go to the round dance wearing a shirt of *şimizet* (embroidered tulle) with narrow collar and the sheets of the sleeves and *stani* sewn and pleated around the neck. The large sleeves were ended by cuffs (locally named *pumni* – fists) made of *posomant* (golden metallic thread sewn by hand especially with geometrical motives). So as not to wear out too quickly, the cuffs could be detached at washing.[20]

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[15] Viorica Pascu, *Portul popular din zona Năsăudului* (*The Folk Costume in the Năsăud Area*), p. 209.

[16] *Chestionarul de port popular pentru A.E.R.*(*The Questionnaire on Folk Costume for A.E.R.*), completed by Elena Secoşan in 1982.

[17] Informer Maria Stoichiţă, aged 76, Porumbacu de Jos.

[18] Ioan I. Şerban, *Viştea de Sus. Contribuţie la monografia satului* (*Viştea de Sus. Contribution to the Village Monograph*), 1987, handwritten; informer Eva Fogoroş, aged 77, Drăguş.

[19] Ioan Augustin Goia, *Zona etnografică Meseş* (*The Meseş Ethnographic Zone*), p. 129.

Certain costume pieces were only destined for maidens. For example, in Şcheii Braşovului only girls were allowed to wear the *vizită* (a silk or felt blouse) and the *boartă* (an underwear shirt made of thin cotton – *madipolon*).[21]

The presence and absence of certain costume pieces indicated age categories and their differentiating notes functioning as a means to communicate the age messages within the community.

The hairdo and the entire headdress represented not only a distinct mark of age and civil status and a sign of ethnic and zonal inclusion but also a ceremonial element.

On holidays or at family events (like weddings) the hairdo would require special attention and the headdress would turn into a real piece of art organically harmonized with all the costume component pieces.

The hairdo of girls in their prime would reflect their beauty and delicacy, being arranged with unequaled skill and cumulating numerous aesthetic elements.

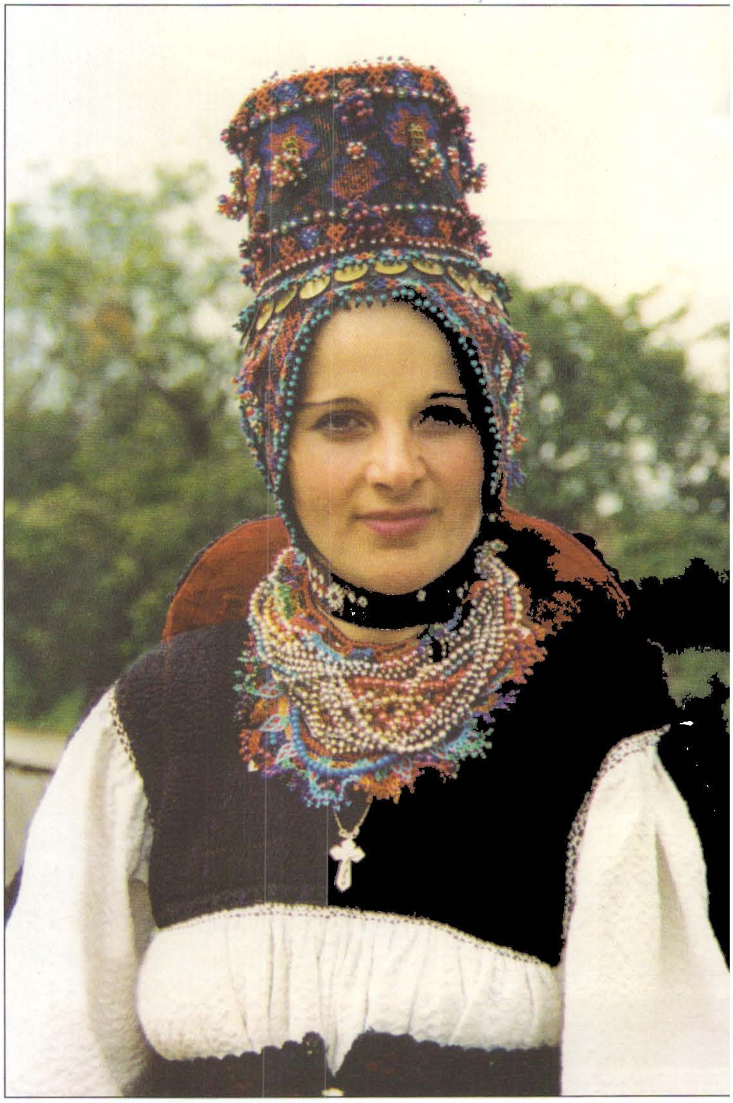
Usually, the godmother – helped by skilful girls and women – would dress the bride at the house of the latter on Sunday morning before going to the religious ceremony.

In some zones like Ţara Oaşului, the bride's hairdo was extremely complicated; it took about four to six hours to make and required a lot of skill and patience that only a specialized woman in the village possessed by braiding the hair into an extremely fine net by using an archaic technique. The ornaments of the headdress took almost as much to be arranged on the hairdo.

The hairdo and headdress of the brides in the zone Rădăuţi were treated with special attention, the result being a remarkable artistic creation. The bride's hair was parted in the middle and braided from the forehead into two plaits that were raised as a crown on the head and tied at the beginning with a lot of *strămătură de dram* (bought thick wool). Over the hairdo the *gâţă* would be placed. The *gâţă* was a circular support made of wood or thin wire around which strands of hair and red wool threads would be wrapped. The band of polychrome small beads was sewn over the support. Two or three Sundays before her wedding, the girl would wear over the *gâţă* another ornament named *legătoare* and made of a 20-centimetres thick cardboard wrapped in white cloth and decorated by alternating coloured pleated small bands and flowers from the fair. Eight to ten peacock feathers would be fixed in the upper part of the *legătoare*.[22]

In the villages of the Land of Olt, girls would wash their long hair and oil it with butter to make it shine and straight and then they would braid it into two *gâţe* with coloured ribbons. A bride would wear on her head the *bordă* – an iron circle wrapped in cloth by which coloured, creased ribbons were stitched and would hang down the back.

The hairdo of the bride in Uzdin (Serbian Banat) was extremely complicated and laborious. Only two or three women in the village were specialized in making this hairdo in several stages. On Saturday night, the girl would bathe in water with basil so as to be lucky and loving and on Sunday at dawn the *brusher* (*perie-*



Bride from Oaş

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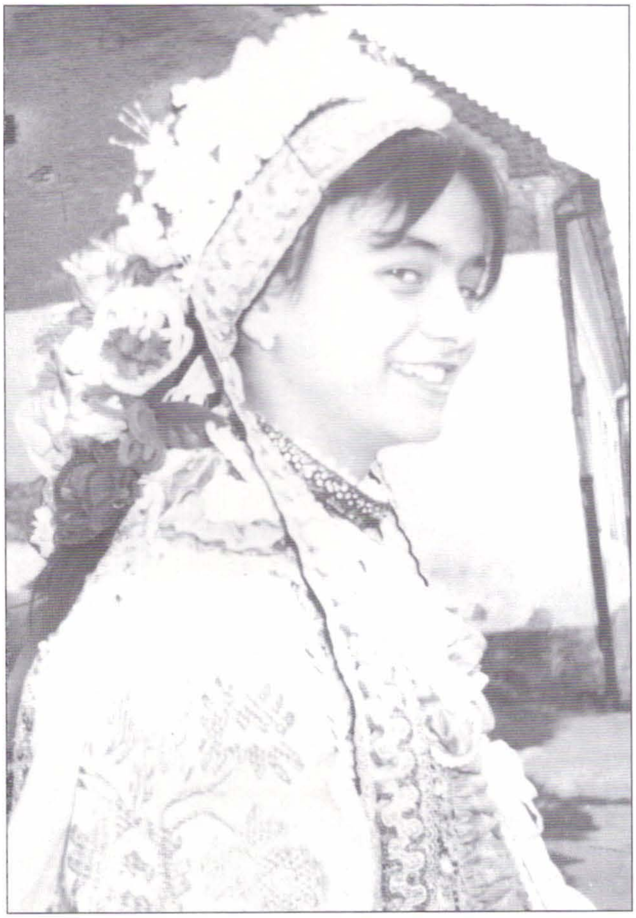
[20] Informer Siţa Jerău, aged 66, Satulung.

[21] Georgeta Stoica, Olivia Moraru, *Semne de recunoaştere în costumul din Şcheii Braşovului şi Săcele (Specific Recognition Signs of the Costume of Săcele and Şcheii Braşovului)*, p. 340.

[22] Maria Cioară, *Zona etnografică Rădăuţi (The Rădăuţi Ethnographic Zone)*, p. 102.



Bride from Uzdin

toare) would come. She was an honoured person in the village as she was the only one who knew how to wave the hair and make its pleats. The hairdo specific for the bride was named "with waved hair".

The front hair would be parted by a semicircular line traced from one ear to the other. Then the expert would wet it with water, oil it with tick pork fat and wet it again. First she would make the *mop*: the hair in the front was tied on the crown of the head by a *maşlă* (ribbon). Then she would use a comb with rare teeth to draw very thin strands and twist them around the fingers to obtain 18-20 pleats on each side of the head, beginning from an ear and ending with the parting. She would wet the hair again and then fix it tight twice or thrice with a tow thread. After that she would cover the hair with a *civală* (a 15-centimetres wide piece of white cloth) and over it she placed the *prăpoadă* (a triangular kerchief ornamented along the forehead side by *şlingăraie* - pierced embroidery). The tow thread, *civală* and *prăpoadă* were used to press the pleats of hair and then they would be taken off the head.

The hair below the mop would be braided in a plait (*chică*) made of three-five strands and ended by the *wire* (a ribbon with floral print bought from the store). Then the plait would be stitched to the mop by the wire and a pin with big nail and three small gold coins would be also fixed there. This hairdo in the shape of the letter O was called *perietură cu largă* (*brushing with the large*).[23]

Regarding the number of strands that made up the plait, they seem to reflect archaic reminiscences of the belief in the good omen value of the magic numbers.

The hairdo with waved hair was adorned by several jewels and decorative accessories made of gold and silver coins, sequins, long silk ribbons, artificial and natural flowers and other elements that were meant to confer to the young girl force, vitality, fertility and accomplishment. Still other symbolic significances of the bride's headdress have been forgotten.

The day before the wedding, the bridegroom would send to the bride his gifts that had the role to adorn and beautify her but also to mark the wealth and prestige of the boy's family. As a rule, the gifts were costume pieces bought or made especially for this occasion of high quality materials. Among them there were head covers (fez, *tulpan, casâncă, bariz* etc) that the bride would wear before she went to the religious ceremony and that the godmother would use to cover her goddaughter's head in order to mark her passage into the category of married women; jewels and also shoes or boots in which silver coins and wheat grains would be put for wealth and luck. The bride would put them on her feet before she went to the religious wedding.

Accompanied by young men and music players in an atmosphere of great joy, the bridegroom's headman reached the bride's house with the clothes bought by the bridegroom in faraway Stamboul, as in the text of one wedding ceremonial epithalamium called "the epithalamium of exchanges". Then the headman shook the clothes reciting the verses[24]:

"The second time he bought
High class merchandise
For her ladyship the bride
He's bought you a fez

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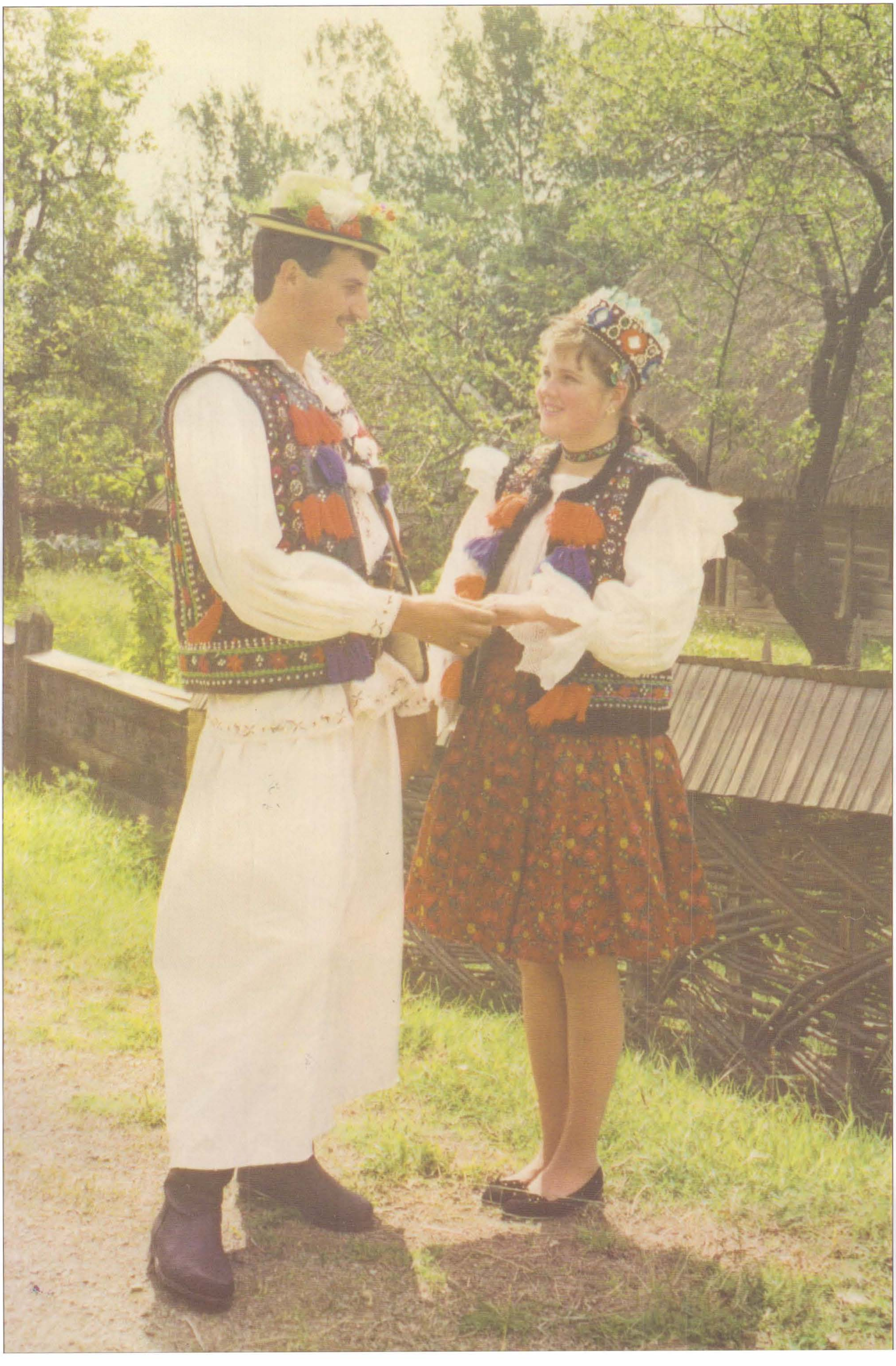
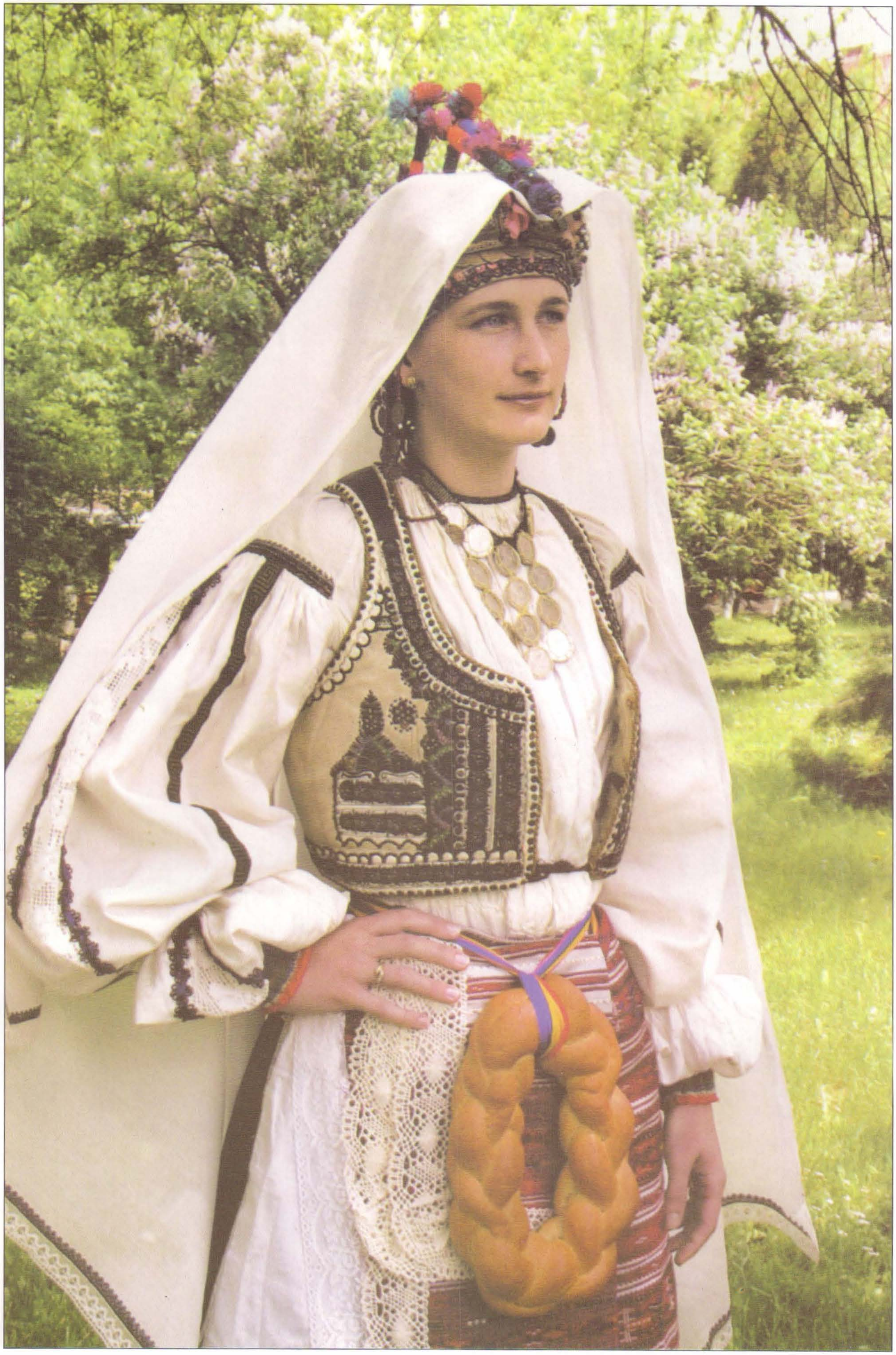
[23] Informer Mărioara Sârbu, aged 67, Uzdin.

[24] *Translator's note* (IRF): I translated all the folk verses in this chapter keeping into account that the author inserted them in the text to illustrate references to the ceremonial significance and function of the folk costume pieces and not due to their poetic quality. Hence I preferred a non-artistic, but accurate English translation.

Groom and bride from Vadu Izei (Maramureş) →





From the first tradesman
To please you again
He's also bought for you
A silk *buccealâc*
To wear it around
A *cutnie* for dresses
The most selected
Suited for a bride;
Tulpane, colţuni and *legători*
To wear on holidays
He's also bought you a mirror
The best in the fair
To make you a fair bride;
He's bought you some soap
From the remote Stamboul
To have for your bath..."[25]

The field data collected by the *AER* questionnaires mention in the districts Botoşani and Vaslui the custom according to which the bridegroom had to buy the bride's clothes and send them through his headman with the group that went to the bride's house. The clothes were put on a tray and the headman would recite the epithalamium of garment presentation. The bride had two round-shaped ritual pieces of bread and a bottle of brandy in her lap. When the clothes were presented to her and she wanted to take them, the headman would draw back the tray saying:

"Wait a minute lady bride,
Do not hurry to take all
As you've hurried to get married
For your parents told you not to
And you made an ugly scene
And told them to get you married."[26]

In the Teleorman district, in the evening when the fir tree would be adorned, the representatives of the bridegroom (*colăceri*) would bring on a tray the bride's veil, her dress and shoes (that replaced the traditional costume pieces), the earrings and beads bought by the bridegroom.[27]

During the wedding ceremonial, the bride would display different elements significant for the rite of passage that she was undergoing and all these ritual marks made her stand out among the other girls that were around.

One of the ritual elements that was frequent in almost all the ethnographic zones of Romania was the "bride's wreath" made of the most different materials and decorative accessories. Beyond its artistic value, the wreath had also the apothropaic function of guarding the young woman against evil forces at the beginning of her new life. The wreath used to represent a sign of acknowledgement for the whole community, as the bride wearing it was in fact the true jewel of the wedding and its main value. The vegetal elements that composed the wreath could be related to an ancient cult of the tree (dendrolatry).[28]

A bride in the Land of Oaş would wear over her hairdo a cylindrical bride's wreath, made of red or dark red velvet ornamented by numerous natural flowers during the summer and artificial flowers during the winter and also by braided cords (up to 25-30) of multicoloured (predominantly red) beads of various sizes and then by coin necklaces. She would also wear other rows of vividly coloured beads (80 in number) around her neck and hanging over the breast.

The bride of Voivodina would wear two wraths: the maid one and the one sent by the bridegroom through his *giveri* on Saturday night. She would fix to this wreath another highly artistic and symbolic piece called *covârlac*. The *covârlac* was made of a 10 centimetres wide black velvet ribbon decorated on its whole surface by a zigzagged ornament sewn with golden thread (named *burmă de aur*, the term *aur* – *gold* reminiscent of the old solar symbol) and by coins, as the ends of the *covârlac*, hanging down to the waist, would be adorned by small gold coins that also covered its front part (and were meant to ensure wealth for the future household). On Sunday, before the wedding feast, the *great giver* would set the wreath offered by the bridegroom on the head of the bride (*govie*) but she would take it off and step on it, repeating this ritual rejection and accepting the wreath only the third time.

The so-called *bortă* (wreath) set on the bride's head in settlements of Bran zone was of gold-plated silver.

← *Bride from Boholţ (Braşov)*

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[25] Simion Florea Marian, *Nunta la români* (*The Romanians' Wedding*), p. 247.

[26] We should mention that this chapter is based not only on bibliography and personal field research but also on the data collected during the investigations conducted for the *Romanian Ethnographic Atlas* (*AER*). I synthesized this information in the chapter *The Ceremonial Wedding Costume* published in the *Corpus of Romanian Ethnographic Documents* (*DER*), coordinated by the reputed ethnologist Ion Ghinoiu, of which four volumes have been published until now and the fifth is ready for printing; Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. IV, *Moldavia*, p. 90.

[27] *Ibidem*, vol. V, in manuscript.

[28] Ion H. Ciubotaru, *Catolicii din Moldova* (*The Catholics in Moldavia*), vol. II, p. 113.

In the north-west of Transylvania, spreading from the Land of Olt to Banat, brides would wear a wreath of polychrome artificial flowers and small mirrors fixed on a green wood structure that had the function of transferring – by magic similitude – duration and prosperity to the new family.

Women in the Bihor district would preserve their wreaths all the life and lend it to close relatives or to the *blood sisters* of each woman, in order to ensure their prosperity.[29]

In Leleşti (the zone Crişul Negru Valley) there was a custom for the friends of the bride to take secretly a flower out of her wreath and wear it in the hair to attract luck and suitors.[30]

In the commune Săpânţa (Maramureş district), the specific costume elements for the bride were: the circular wreath made of small flowers cut out of polychrome paper sheets and ornamented laterally by a decoration called *struţ*, multicoloured ribbons braided in the plaits and the jewels worn around the neck: rows of Bohemia black or dark red beads with coloured vegetal motives and especially the expensive coral necklace that would reflect the social status and welfare of the bride.[31]

A bride of Drăguş (Land of Olt) would wear her hair cut or braided in two plaits raised on the head. Over her hair she would set the wreath made of *bordiţe* – three-four ribbons with little flowers bought from the store, forming a small crown of pieces of glass and artificial flowers.

This rich decoration would confer to the bride a remarkably elegant and bright appearance. The plural symbolism of the ornaments worn during the wedding ceremonial expressed the idea of protecting the couple against malefic forces, helping the two young people to step over the most important existential threshold under good auspices.

In the villages in the districts Bistriţa-Năsăud and Cluj, while the bride was adorned with the wreath made of flowers, wheat ears and basil stems, with the *struţ* and the *peahens* the girls were singing the song of the wreath to her:

"Oh, bride with wreath
Your goodness shows
Clothes sound on you
On you and the bed
As on an emperor's girl
They don't sound like laziness
But they sound like worthiness
For your mother wasn't bad
Only if you were like her
She made you with curly hair
And sold you for a price fair
Little wreath of *sasău*
I'd put you on my head
If I knew that I'd do right
I'd let you there all right
But if I knew that I'd do wrong
I'd throw you down right away".[32]

On Saturday night, the party that would be organized at the house of the bride marked the separation of the girl from her former status of maid by some ritual actions: the bride's maids of honour (*druşte*) would set the wreath on her head and they would sing ceremonial songs of separation.

In Moldavia on the left side of the Prut, the brides would wear ceremonial head covers with symbolic and ritual function. The wreath made of pleated cloth adorned by two rows of coins at the basis was set on a long kerchief in the center of Bessarabie.

The wreath in Bucovina (Cernăuţi region) was made of a tall cardboard support wrapped in white cloth on which artificial flowers of different colours would be fixed and a row of coloured feathers would adorn its upper part.[33]

On the Someş Valley, a woman specialized in the bride's headdress would part her hair on the middle and braid it in two plaits that united at the nape of the neck in a single plait adorned by a long *petea* (ribbon) bought from the store and decorated with flowers and sequins. Over this *petea* the bride would wear a round wreath made of natural flowers (geranium, basil, marjoram) and bunches (*struţuri*) on the lateral sides.

In other settlements in the Năsăud area, a bride would wear her hair braided in two plaits from the crown of the head and then raised as a circle around the head. Over the plaits, she would wear a wreath made of *bumbuşte* and *spilce* (metallic needles) bought from the fair and adorned at the back by flowers bunched in *struţuri*. The two *peahens* were fixed by the ear sides.[34]

[29-30] Maria Bocşe, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă (The Wedding Ceremonial Costume)*, in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri (Celebrations and Customs)*, vol. III, *Transylvania*, p. 264.

[31] Olga Horşia, *Portul popular din comuna Săpânţa, regiunea Maramureş (The Folk Costume in Săpânţa, Maramureş Region)*, p. 459.

[32] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă (The Wedding Ceremonial Costume)*, in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri (Celebrations and Customs)*, vol. III, *Transylvania*, p. 76.

[33] *Idem*, *Dimensiunile spirituale ale Basarabiei (The Spiritual Dimensions of Bessarabie)*, p. 146.

[34] Viorica Pascu, *Portul popular din zona Năsăudului (The Folk Costume of the Năsăud Area)*, p. 209.

The specific bridal sign spread all over the Romanian area is the bride's veil with various names from one zone to another: *balţ, sovon, jolj, şlaier, hobot*. Usually, the bridegroom or the godmother (more rarely) would buy the veil.

The person who would set the ritual headdress of the bride was selected according to local tradition.

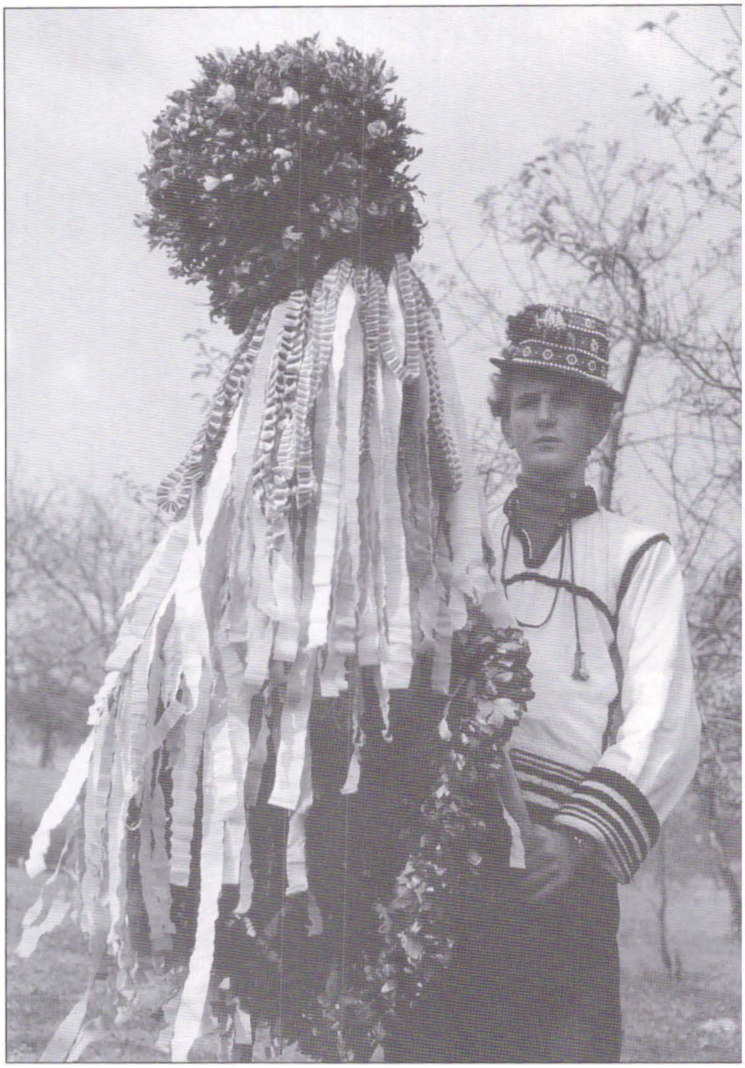
For example, in some villages in the Sălaj district, the wreath and veil (*jolj*) were put on the bride's head in the church. The godmother would buy and cut the veil and the wreath of *sasău* would be made by the bride's friends during the party organized on the eve of the ceremony and the girls would take it to church. The "bridegroom's brother", who had to have living parents, was the one who put the veil on the bride's head. She would reject the veil twice and receive it only the third time.[35]

In the Satu Mare district, the priest was the one to set the *sovon* (veil) on the bride's head while in Timiş district the *giver* (headman) would do the same thing, after the bridegroom's party reached the bride's house and the young girl came out to the *şofei*. The *şofei* (water tub) was prepared on a table in the courtyard. The bride would sprinkle the people around her with a bunch of basil dipped into water and they would throw money in the *şofei*.[36] The water had propitiatory and prophylactic roles and the whole ritual act was meant to protect the bride and the wedding guests against malefic forces.[37]

While the bride was "dressed up" at her parents' house, the girls would sing the *Bride's song*, accompanied by the folk music players (*lăutari*). People would also dance in the meanwhile in most ethnographic zones of Romania.

In the commune Şanţ (Bistriţa-Năsăud district), young men would adorn the standard the night before the wedding: two crossed sticks were wrapped in a big home woven towel with *canaci* (tassels) and ornamented by a lot of coloured *petele*, over which men would put a wreath of *bărbănoc* with a bunch of wheat ears in the middle. Bells that would sound during the "dance of the standard" were fixed below the wreath. That dance took place when the bridegroom's party came to the bride's house to take her to church.[38]

An individual would display ceremonial costume elements by the traditional rules as the control of society upon the individual was extremely powerful. Any deviation from the custom and from the moral norms settled by community and strengthened by tradition would be sanctioned severely in order to keep the order and decency of the group.



Wedding standard from Oaş

For example, on the Someş valley, if a girl was not a virgin when she got married she would not wear a ribbon (*petea*) down the back but on the nape of the neck and her wreath was put over the *petea*. When a girl who *had been wrong* entered the church to marry, she would wear a white *sovon* wrapped as a turban around her head and over it the round wreath adorned by flowers and lateral *struţuri*. She would wear a *conci* like the widows and not plaits down the back.[39]

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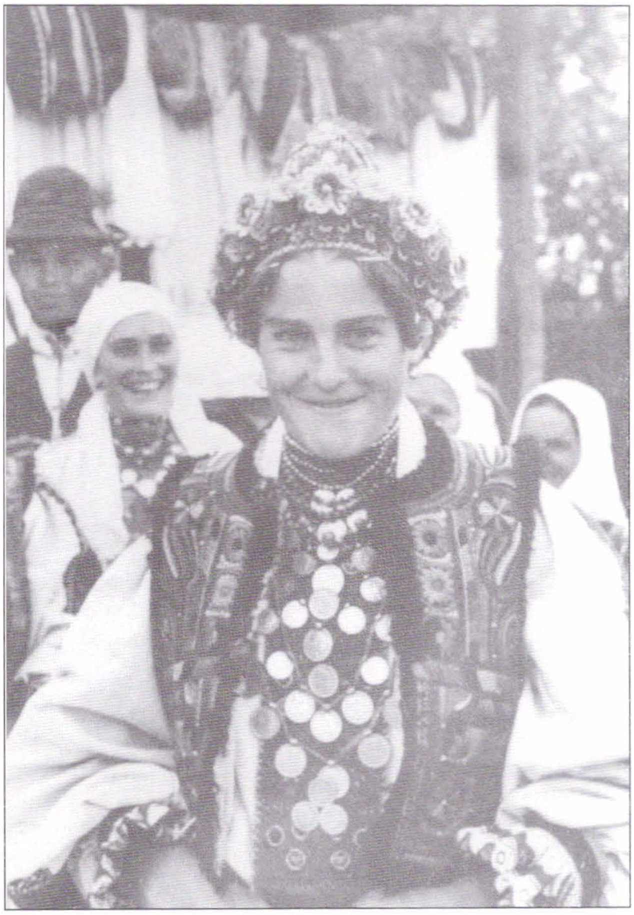
[35] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. III, *Transylvania*, p. 77.

[36] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. II, *Banat, Crişana, Maramureş*, p. 72.

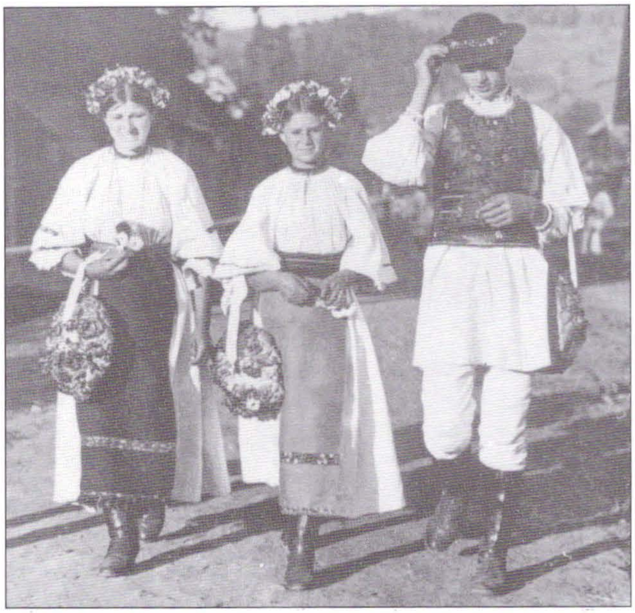
[37] Mihai Pop, *Obiceiuri tradiţionale româneşti* (*Romanian Folk Customs*), p. 145.

[38] Informer Octavian Olariu, aged 88, Şanţ.

[39] Informers Ioan Hanţig, aged 76, and Lucreţiu Hanţig, aged 75, Şanţ.



Bride from the Pădureni area



Wearing the bride's wreath in the Năsăud zone

An unmarried girl with child would wear just a head kerchief without wreath at her wedding.[40] In that case, the bridegroom had to buy two kerchiefs for his future wife: one for her to wear on the head and one that they would both hold to when they entered the church. The latter was called *kerchief of faith* and it symbolized the union between the two protagonists of the wedding. It also acted as a sign of recognition in the world after death and the owner of the kerchief would take it with her/him in the grave.

The traditional community made a net distinction between a virgin and a maid who "had done wrong" before the wedding, as the bride's virginity was looked at as a form of respect towards her new family and the whole society. For example, in the Bacău district, the girl "in the wrong" was obliged to marry during the night and she would wear a shirt and a *fotă*, not the white dress that only a virgin could wear (and that had replaced the local costume), as the local community resented powerfully any deviation from the norm.[41]

In Maramureş district, the girl "in the wrong" would leave for the church wearing her veil (*balţ*) on the head while the virgin would receive the *balţ* in the church; the priest would arrange it with the cross[42], as the purity of the bride was considered a guarantee for the duration of the marriage.[43]

The custom to dance presenting the headdress of the bride was general in Moldavia. Two girls would hold to a mirror adorned with beautiful towels. The bride would sit down on a pillow as there was the belief that her life would be light as the pillow if she sat there. In the meanwhile, young men would dance keeping her veil and head ornaments up on apple branches (the apple tree was considered a good omen that would bring health and fertility and was a symbol of fruitfulness and freshness).

On the Sunday of the wedding, in some villages in Vaslui district, a few girls called *vornicese* would help the godmother to dress up the bride. After she was dressed, two *vornicese* standing behind here were dancing with the veil (*hobot*). A young man (*vornicel*) would dance in front of the bride and *vornicese*, keeping in his hand his ritual sign: two rods adorned with tinsel. Then the *vornicese* would take the tinsel and fix it on the bride's head.

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[40] Informer Maria Domide, aged 97 de ani.

[41] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. IV, *Moldavia*, p. 96.

[42] *Ibidem*, vol. II, *Banat, Crişana, Maramureş*, p. 73.

[43] Ion H. Ciubotaru, *Catolicii din Moldova* (*The Catholics in Moldavia*), vol. II, p. 91.

While dressing up the bride, her maids of honour (*druşte*) sang to her:

"When I was a girl in my mother's house
Even if I was working or I wasn't
I was still my mother's dear
But since I got married
I've grown scared of my man
He wouldn't let me out at night
Hitting me hard with his fists."[44]

Field materials contained in the questionnaires for the *AER* mentioned the existence, in the space of Oltenia (the districts Gorj, Mehedinţi, Olt, Vâlcea) of an ancient custom prescribing that the bride should wear on her head a *sovon* – a head kerchief made initially of hemp or linen and later of thin cotton sewn as a hood with the top adorned with a bunch of basil which was thought to have good influence upon the young couple. In the commune Izverna (Mehedinţi district), well-off brides would wear head kerchiefs (*peşchire*) pleated as hoods and then they replaced them by raw silk head kerchiefs, both head covers indicating the social-economic status of the bride along with the gold or silver coin necklaces.[45]

The well-off brides from the villages in the south of Romania would wear on their heads felt fezzes with black tassels bought from the town while the poorer girls would wear red girdles sewn as hoods (*sovoane*) drawn down to the eyebrows and adorned by a bunch of basil on the top.[46]

I recorded the same custom during my field research in the village Negrileşti (Land of Vrancea). The bride would wear over her wreath the *hobot* – a head kerchief made of cotton or raw silk, folded and sewn up as a hood with the top adorned by two little coins (*piţigoi* – titmice). This *hobot* reached down the forehead to the eyebrows of the bride, who would wear it day and night and she would dance with it on her head during the whole wedding.[47]

An obligatory ceremonial costume piece in Şcheii Braşovului was the *procov* shaped as a hood with the longer part hanging down the back. The bride would wear the *procov* drawn down the forehead so as she couldn't see where she was lead by the godmother.[48]

The bridegroom had to buy for the bride costume pieces with ritual function, among which: *fez, tulpan, casâncă, bariz, şal* (shawl), *bertă, pânzătură*.

The bride would wear the ritual head covers down the back, around the neck, on her shoulders or on the arm before going to the religious service.

The passage of the bride from the status of girl to that of wife was marked by a special ritual moment known as the bride's tying, veiling or *înhobotit* and observed all over Romania by practicing symbolic acts as the change of the bride's hairdo and the covering of her head with a textile piece.

The signs that confirmed the young girl's integration into the group of married women differed from one ethnographic zone to another, according to local traditions. From the moment she got married onwards, a woman had to wear a specific head cover, the absence of which was considered a grave deviance from the traditional behavioural norms, generating malefic consequences affecting all the community members.

In most ethnographic zones of Romania, the godmother would set the *conci* on the head of the bride the next day after the wedding. The *conci* was a triangular or circular support made of diverse materials, wrapped in cloth and fixing the woman's plaits. Over the *conci* the godmother would set the head textile piece that marked the status change. The community members could easily indicate the civil status of a young woman by "reading" the binary opposition: a girl (bride) would walk bareheaded, with her plaits down the back, and a wife would have her head covered by a textile piece.

After the wedding feast with the moments of presenting the gifts and announcing them, the godmother would *undress* the bride and the godfather would take the artificial flower stitched on the breast of the bridegroom's costume. During this ritual, many variants of songs depicting the significance of changing the hairdo and covering the head of the bride would be interpreted in different ethnographic zones. Here is an example:

"Take good care, daughter
Now we tie the cloth around your head
We tie it as we should
To end your maidenhood
Now, daughter, we tie around your head
A silk *zadie*
May you wear it in health

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[44] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă (The Wedding Ceremonial Costume)*, in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri (Celebrations and Customs)*, vol. IV, *Moldavia*, p. 92.

[45] Aurelia Tiţă, *Contribuţii la interpretarea funcţiilor portului popular femeiesc din Izverna – Mehedinţi (Contributions to the Interpretation of the Functions of the Women's Folk Costume in Izverna, Mehedinţi district)*, pp. 211-212.

[46] Elena Secoşan, Paul Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România (The Festive Folk Costume in Romania)*, p. 26.

[47] Informer Măriuţa Neculai Dumitraşcu, aged 77, Negrileşti.

[48] Olivia Moraru, *Contribuţii la cunoaşterea portului popular din Şcheii Braşovului (Contributions to the Study of the Costume of Şcheii Braşovului)*, p. 348.

A cotton *zadie*
May you wear it with pleasure
Daughter once you swore fiercely
That you wouldn't cover your head
Now take back your vow
As we take back our soles from the ground
For from now on, daughter
You won't braid your hair
You'll just cover your head."[49]

In the Maramureş district, as in many other zones of the country, at the end of the wedding, the standard bearer would take by force the bride's wreath while she defended herself and cried. Finally, the godmother covered her head by the wife kerchief (*pânzătură*).[50]

The ritual of covering the bride's head was most interesting in the village Vrâncioaia (Land of Vrancea). After unbraiding the bride's hair, the godmother would wet it with wine in which she had put hemp, wheat and lily seeds. Then she arranged the bride's hairdo with *horns*. She would tie by threads the strands of hair above the girl's ears, and then she would braid them and twist the plaits as buns (named *horns*) on the sides of the head. The horns would be covered by a white cloth over which the *fruntar* was set (the *fruntar* was a cotton kerchief woven by a technique *in little loops – în ochişori* and ornamented by red and black streaks made with dyed cotton; its ends overlapped at the back of the head). Over the *fruntar*, the bride's head was covered by a home woven cotton head kerchief or by one made of raw silk and bought from the fair.[51]

In Uzdin, the godmother would cover the bride's head in a similar way. The bride's hair would be braided in plaits that were crossed several times at the back of the head and then covered by a *conci* made of wicker and fixed by two very tightly braided strands of hair. The *conci* had the shape of a rectangle without its upper side and it had to reach from one ear to another. The ends of the *conci* were called *horns* and they served as support for tying two threads around the head in order to fix the headdress. On the right side of the *conci* six to eight small gold coins (or crowns) would be sewn and on the left side there were sewn differently coloured buttons. The head textile piece covered the *conci*. Rich women would wear *conci* with gold coins sewn on both sides. "It was a pleasure to watch a woman bringing water in the *obraniţă* and moving in the rhythm of the golden coins that were ringing and shining in the sun", said Mărioara Sârbu, a famous weaver of Uzdin.

On the Someş Valley, the godmother – assisted by other women – would take the wreath off the head of the sitting bride and she would cover her head by the tasseled kerchief tied at the nape of the neck, fixing the two *struţuri* into the sides of the kerchief. Actually, that kerchief had been bought by the bridegroom and he and the bride had held on to it when entering the church. In the meanwhile, some women said aloud:

"Bride of a good root
Feel sorry for your wreath
For your flower wreath
Takes you out of the boys
And puts you among men
Takes you out of the girls
And puts you among wives
Bride of good root
The shirt sings on you
It shows you've been good
The song is not in the shirt
Your beauty is the song."[52]

After she covered the bride's head, the godmother took her by the hand and danced with her, reciting:

"Come on sister, dance with me
God bless you with luck
For all who danced with me
Were blessed by God with luck."[53]

All the wedding guests who danced with the bride offered her a sum of money and that ceremonial act marked the integration of the young woman into her new family, the family of the bridegroom.[54]

In the village Beclean (Land of Făgăraş), after the wedding feast and the offering of the bride's gifts to the bridegroom's relatives, the dance of the *căiţă* would take place, when each wedding guest who wanted to dance with the bride had to pay her some money.[55]

In the village Monor (Bistriţa-Năsăud district), the *ceapsă* and the *ştergar* (head kerchief) were the textile pieces that marked the integration of the girl into the group of married women. The next day after the wedding, the godmother would braid the bride's hair in two plaits thickened by spun wool filaments and would tie the plaits on the nape of the neck, forming a round bun. Then she would set on her goddaughter's head the *ceapsă with brusturi* – common burs, which was a bonnet, made of industrial material, usually dark red or black velvet and artistically embroidered with geometric and vegetal motives sewn with polychrome silk threads. The *ceapsă* was tied under the chin with ribbons and it had a front margin of pleated black lace called *brusturi* – common burs. Young wives would adorn their *brusturi* by hairpins and artificial and natural flowers set by the ears. They would wear this decorated headdress one week more after the wedding and then they would take the *brusturi* off and continued to wear the simple *ceapsă* until death.

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[49] Violeta Blaj; Elena Grigorescu, *Zona etnografică Făget* (*The Făget ethnographic Zone*), p. 119.

[50] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. II, *Banat, Crişana, Maramureş*, p. 73.

[51] Informer Todora Pasăre, aged 82, Vrâncioaia.

[52] Informer Lucreţia Chisnăr, aged 80 de ani, Şanţ.

[53] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. III, *Transylvania*, p. 79.

[54] Mihai Pop, *Folclor românesc* (*Romanian Folklore*), p. 23.

[55] *** Muzeul Etnografic al Ardealului (The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania), Archive no. 442, 1940.

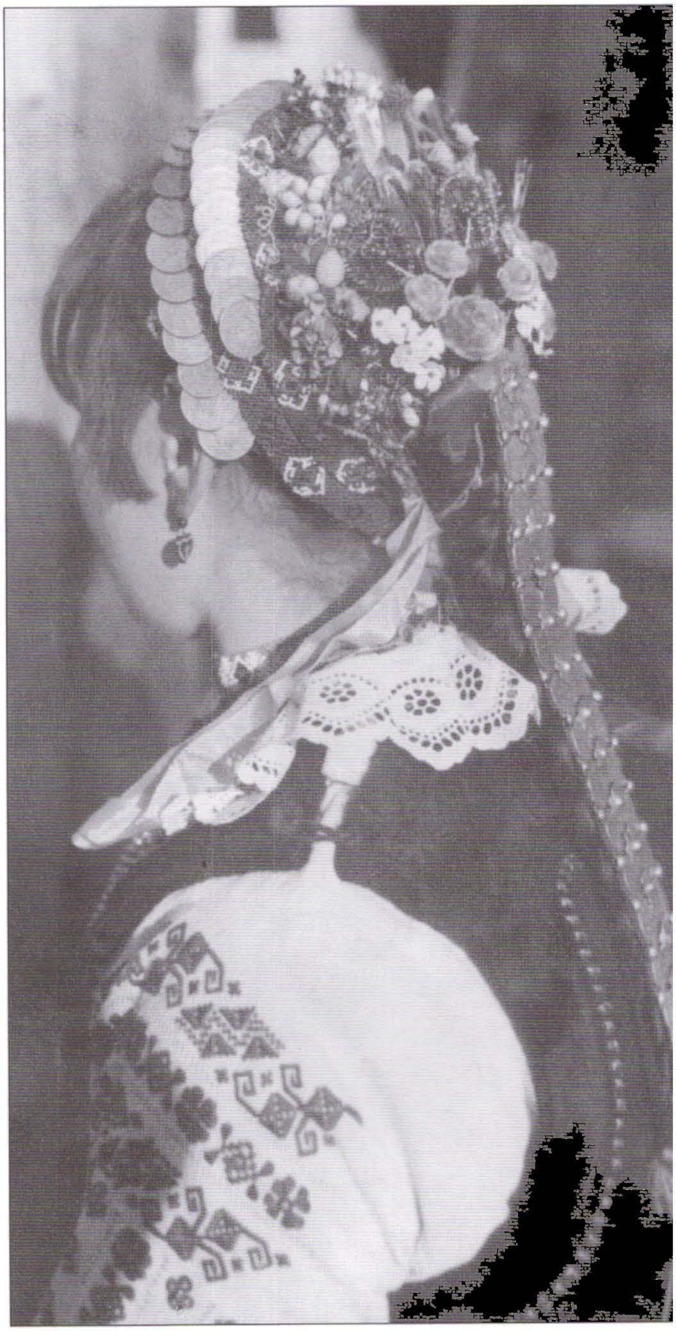
The godmother would cover the young woman's *ceapsă* by a home woven white head kerchief called *head cindeu* and decorated at one end by rhythmically grouped coloured streaks and at the other end by patterned streaks woven by hand with geometric and floral motives made with polychrome dyed cotton. At the end of the 19th century, the head kerchief was replaced by the industrial head piece bought from the store, made of wool, cotton, soft wool (*bercă*), silk or felt (*pliş*), decorated with feathers (forming floral motives) and fixed to the temple by small spherical buttons and natural flowers.[56]

In the Land of Olt, the *căiţă with reţe* and the *pomeselnic* were the signs that consecrated the integration of the young girl into the group of married women.

At Viştea de Sus, the bride's head would be covered in an interesting manner. She would have two *căiţe* over the plaits raised across the head: both were made of cloth but one had horns and the other had ends by wool hair, on which nets adorned by red and green sequins (*parale* or *părăluţe*) were fixed.[57] The *pomeselnic* (head kerchief) were put over the *căiţă* and arranged differently, according to local tradition.

In the Moldavia to the east of the Prut River, the head kerchief had the ritual function of marking the integration of the girl into the group of married women. The custom of covering the bride's hair was called *dezbroboditul, dezlegatul, înhobotarea miresei* or *legătoare*.

Here is an interesting description made by the folklorist Petre V. Ştefănucă of the *legătoare* of Ialoveni: "The godmother brings a sheepskin coat, folds it and sets it on the



Headdress of a bride from Banat

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[56] *Chestionarul de port popular pentru A.E.R.* – localitatea Monor (*The Questionnaire on Folk Costume for A.E.R. – The Monor Com-munity*), completed by Elena Secoşan.

[57] Ioan I. Şerban, *Viştea de Sus. Contribuţie la monografia satului* (*Viştea de Sus. Contribution to the Village Monograph*), unpublished.

chair on which the two young couple will sit down. Then she salves their heads and hands with honey, combs their hair beginning to the young woman's hair. Then she covers her goddaughter's head by a black *şalincă*, as she is no longer maid, but a wife".[58]

The sheepskin coat on which the two young people sat down was a symbol meant to secure their luck with sheep.

In Prahova district, on the occasion of the covering of her head, the bride would offer to the godmother a richly embroidered home-made towel and a pillow and to the godfather a decorated shirt for which she received a sum of money.[59]

These gifts prepared with care and great expense had the role of getting the couple closer to their spiritual parents (the godparents).

The bride would wear obligatorily certain jewels and costume pieces at her wedding.

In the villages in the zone Bran, a well-off bride would wear a necklace made of 80-100 silver small coins intercalated with golden coins (*icuşari*) arranged in many rows over her breast.[60] The number of coins that made up the necklace and the metal of which they were made (gold or silver) constituted the distinctive social sign of the status of the respective bride.

In some villages in the districts Olt and Vâlcea, a bride who did not have a gold coin necklace had to borrow it. According to folk beliefs, the jewels that a bride wore during the wedding ceremonial had the power to transmit beauty and health to the future family and also to keep away the evil forces.

Brides in the north-west of Transylvania, from the Land of Olt to Banat, would wear on their foreheads *eye bands* (*zgărduţe*) or *forehead bands* made of coloured beads and with a margin of silver coins.[61]

The bortiţă was a jewel that all the girls in the zone Perşani would wear on holidays and then, up to our days, only on the Saturday before their wedding, when the girls are invited to dance. This ritual piece was a band made of 40 small coins (*pătace*) that would hang down the forehead and of two rows of brass coins (*bălţişori*) that would hang below the years. It was completed by *ştiurechi* – two metallic ornaments of bronze and engraved stones with a small brass chain and an artificial red flower with a little mirror (called "carnation") hanging by the ear. The last ornament of the *bortiţă* was made of peacock feathers that were fixed by ear sides.[62]

Some costume pieces would be worn for the first time at the wedding. For example, unmarried girls could not wear the *vâlnic* in the districts Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinţi and Vâlcea. In Mehedinţi, the bride and the godmother had to wear the *red pleat* (*vâlnic*).[63]

In Şcheii Braşovului, a girl had to wait for the wedding to wear for the first time the golden plated silver girdle decorated by 9 to 12 silver rosettes, rubies or coloured pieces of glass called *nafte*. Both ends of the girdle provided with silver or gold buckles, would be fastened on by a cord or ribbons that would hang down to the laps of the skirt.[64]

In Paloş (zone Rupea), the bride would wear two shirts one over the other: a wife shirt and a girl shirt.

The moment when the bride's head was covered to mark her new status, she would take off the shirt of girl; she would put on the narrow back *catrinţă* with red background decorated by horizontal streaks; and she would wear two wider front aprons one after the other to point out her wealth.

On her wedding day, a bride of Veneţia (Perşani zone) would wear a girl's shirt, with the sleeves attached to the neck line and pleated below the *altiţă*. After the feast at the girl's house, the godmother would dress her with the wife's shirt.[65]

In the Meseş area, a girl would put on the back *zadie* the next day after the wedding; this ceremonial costume piece became obligatory for her clothing, as it marked her new status of married woman. Even after the *zadie* got out of use, in the village Bogdana its ceremonial function was still preserved: a bride had to wear the *zadie* four Sundays in a row after her wedding and only afterwards she could wear the laps and the apron that were part of the daily local costume.[66]

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[58] P.V. Ştefănucă, *Folclor şi tradiţii populare* (*Folklore and Folk Tradi-tions*), vol. I, p. 74.

[59] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. V, ready for printing.

[60] Georgeta Stoica, Olivia Moraru, *Zona etnografică Bran* (*The Bran Ethnographic Zone*), p. 98.

[61] Maria Bocşe, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. III, *Transylvania*, p. 264.

[62] Cornel Irimie, *Portul popular din zona Perşanilor. Ţara Oltului* (*The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Perşani Zone*), p. 22.

[63] Aurelia Tiţă, *Contribuţii la interpretarea funcţiilor portului popular femeiesc din Izverna – Mehedinţi* (*Contributions to the Interpretation of the Functions of the Women's Folk Costume in Izverna, Mehedinţi district*), p. 206.

[64] George Moroianu, *Chipuri din Săcele* (*Portraits of Săcele*), p. 94.

[65] Cornel Irimie, *Portul popular din zona Perşanilor. Ţara Oltului* (*The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Perşani Zone*), p. 40.

[66] Ioan Augustin Goia, *Zona etnografică Meseş* (*The Meseş Ethnographic Zone*), p. 129.

Wearing the folk costume on holidays was obligatory according to field information. In some villages in the districts Bacău şi Vâlcea The bride had to wear the folk costume on the Saturday before the wedding.

The winter coats were also a ceremonial mark irrespective of the season. In some villages in the Bistriţa-Năsăud district, brides were obliged to wear goat skin red boots and the sewn up waistcoat richly ornamented by beads and embroideries and specially made for their wedding, even if it took place in the summer. On the Someş valley, rich girls wore knee high black leather boots with soft boot legs at their wedding.

Brides in Arpaşu de Jos, Sibiu district, were obliged to wear knee high boots which they would borrow if they couldn't afford to buy a pair.[67]

The *suman* or the fleecy white *gubă* in Satu Mare and Maramureş, the *zeghe* in Braşov, the *ţundră* in Cluj and the white *şubă* in Hunedoara were obligatory pieces of the bride costume.

In Nistoreşti (Land of Vrancea), the *sarică* - a long coat made of thick fleecy white homespun wool cloth - was obligatory in a girl's dowry: she couldn't go to the round dance without it and had to wear it as a bride.

In Moldavia (districts Botoşani, Neamţ, Vaslui and Vrancea) the *caţaveică* with fox fur trimming around the neck was the obligatory costume piece for brides.[68] The same costume piece called *scurteică* was obligatory for brides in districts Brăila, Călăraşi şi Ialomiţa.[69]

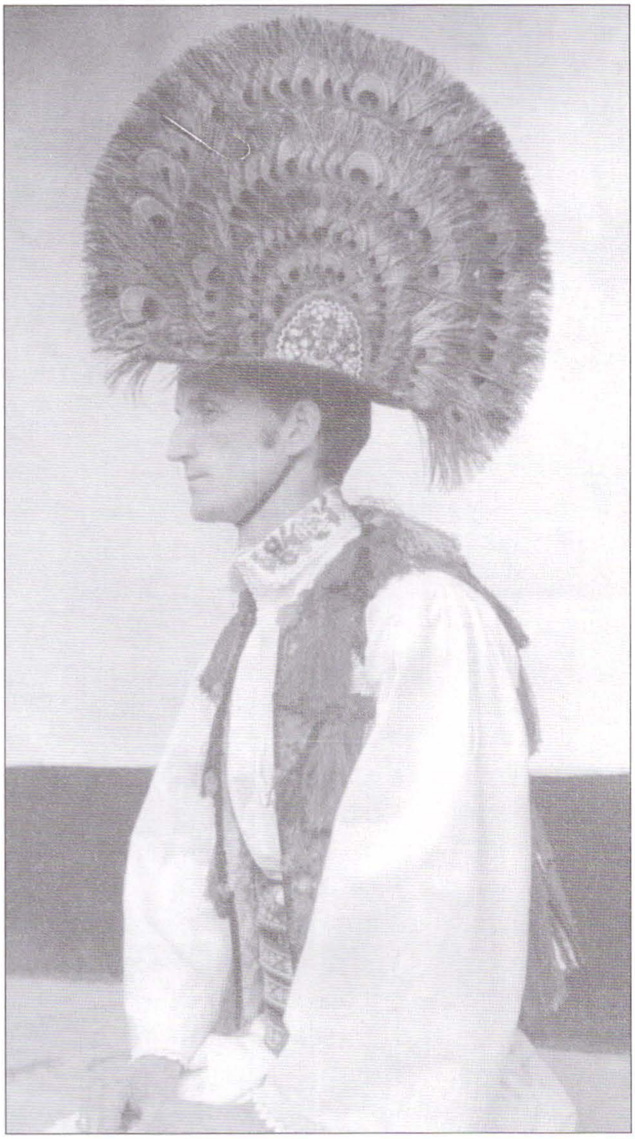
The new sheepskin coat was obligatory in the dowry of brides in the village Gura Râului, Sibiu district.[70]

The social-economic differences were quite visible in the ceremonial wedding costume. The rich brides of Bran wore sheepskin coats at their wedding while the poor ones would put on a cloth (*zeichi*) *bundă*. Later, the rich girls started to wear the *scurteică* - long large sleeveless coat made of atlas - as brides.

The bridegroom would also wear ceremonial costume elements meant to create a festive, sumptuous look for him but also to point out symbolically his social prestige on such an important occasion as the wedding.

A bridegroom would adorn his hat or cap - according to local tradition, his material status and also to the imagination and taste of the persons who would dress him up - with a series of decorative accessories made of the most diverse materials.

The wreath or the bunch (*struţ*) for the bridegroom's head cover was made of evergreen plants (*brebenoc*, *sasău*, rosemary, ivy) because these vegetal elements symbolized the youth and the bursting vitality of the young men.



Bridegroom from Năsăud

Gheorghe Focşa mentions a custom in the Land of Oaş according to which the bride helped by a few *druşte* would adorn the bridegroom's hat (*clop*) with velvet bands embroidered with coloured beads, a lot of rows of white beads and also by little bunches of rosemary and a wreath of green *bărbănoc* leaves, all strung on a thread and put around the calotte along with some mostly red and spherical buttons.[71]

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[67] Informer Maria Telea, aged 74, Arpaşu de Jos.

[68] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă (The Wedding Ceremonial Costume)*, in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri (Celebrations and Customs)*, vol. IV, *Moldavia*, p. 99.

[69] *Ibidem*, vol. V, in manuscris.

[70] Arhiva etnografică a Ardealului nr. 461 (The Ethnographic Archive of Transylvania no. 461), 1948.

[71] Gheorghe Focşa, *Spectacolul nunţii din Ţara Oaşului (Wedding As a Performance in the Land of Oaş)*, pp. 72-73.

The young couple would be wed in the church wearing such wreaths of *brebenoc* and wheat ears, made by girls. As homage paid to the bread, the priest would touch the wreaths only with his cross and put on the heads of the bride and the bridegroom.[72]

The bridegroom would also wear at his breast a little bunch of evergreen plants as vestige of the ancient dendrolatry.[73]

There was the custom in many areas of Romania that the bridegroom's hat or cap would be adorned by gold or silver coins offered by godparents or parents so as the young man would have wealth in his new life. Sometimes, golden coins (*icuşari*) taken from the bride's necklace would adorn the bridegroom's hat or cap.

In some areas, these expensive adornments were obligatory in the wedding ceremony and the ones who didn't have such coins had to borrow them.[74]

Other elements frequently used to adorn the bridegroom's head cover were peacock, pheasant, turkey or cock feathers that would associate to other accessories like: flowers, beads, silk coloured ribbons or three-coloured ribbons, money, tassels, little mirrors, tinsel, golden thread cords, wheat and barley ears (with prophylactic and purifying virtues).

The most spectacular peacock feather adornment was worn by the bridegrooms in the Bistriţa-Năsăud district. It was made of hundreds of feathers artistically set as a fan by a specialized craftsman who would sell it mostly to the rich. The bridegroom's hat (*clop*) in commune Şanţ had lowered rims and it was adorned by a bunch of geraniums and black peahen feathers on the middle of its front and by a cord sewn with beads.[75]

In Arpaşu de Jos (Sibiu district), the bridegroom wore a hat - like those of the village Drăguş - adorned with coloured tassels made by girls (his mother or sisters) of *strămătură*, by a bead cord and a bought ornamental bunch (*vâstră*) made of artificial flowers on green background and peacock feathers. He wore his hat adorned like that one or two more years after his marriage.[76]

Certain symbolic pieces would be part of the costume since the engagement till the wedding (the two important stages in a traditional marriage).

The distinctive sign worn by the bridegroom was called *vâstră*, *peană* or *struţ*. It was made or bought by the bride and her partner would wear it at his hat since the day of their engagement or the day before the wedding. In other areas, the girls would adorn the bridegroom's hat the evening before the wedding, when the wedding standard was also made.

The bridegroom would differ from other young men by the size, complexity and the manner of wearing his *struţ*. Usually, he would wear it on the right side of his hat, unlike the others who would wear it on the left.

In Maramureş district, the bridegroom and the bride would get their distinctive signs the night before the wedding, moment which was called "evening for the standard". The bride would give the *struţ* for hat (*clop*) to her bridegroom and he would offer her the coloured ribbons (*cipce*) that were to be braided in her plaits. The bride, bridegroom, standard bearer and the *druşcă* (close friend to the bride) would take part in the act of displaying these distinctive signs.[77]

The feather would be still worn for a month after the wedding in some villages in the districts Braşov and Bistriţa-Năsăud.

Simion Florea Marian also described the custom according to which the bridegroom had to wear the *feather* ("flower from the fair") that his future bride had sewn on his cap since engagement until the *uncrop* (the party organized by the boy's parents the next day after the wedding), on holidays and work days alike. "By this flower people know who of the young men are engaged as only future bridegrooms would wear expensive cap adornments on the working days".[78]

Therefore, the ritual costume elements worn by the bridegroom at his hat or cap marked his distinct position among the wedding guests.

There were ceremonial clothing rules settled by tradition that specified the circumstances under which certain costume pieces could be worn. For example, in the villages in the districts Arad, Maramureş, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj and Sălaj it is customary for the bridegroom to wear the hat (*clop*) at all times during the nuptial ceremony, as that attitude suggests that he has become the head of a family and has taken over the responsibility of keeping his household. He would not take off his *clop* and would wear it even in the church and during the wedding feast.[79]

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[72] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. III, *Transylvania*, pp. 70-71.

[73] Ion Ghinoiu, *Studiu introductiv* (*Introductory Study*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. III, *Transylvania*, p. XVI-XVII.

[74] *Ibidem*, vol. I, *Oltenia*, p. 79.

[75] Informers Lucreţiu and Ioan Hanţig, aged 75 and 76 respectively, from Şanţ.

[76] Informer Maria Telea, aged 74, Arpaşu de Jos.

[77] Mihai Dăncuş, *Zona etnografică Maramureş* (*The Maramureş Ethnographic Zone*), p. 181.

[78] Simion Florea Marian, *Nunta la români* (*The Romanians' Wedding*), p. 137.

The bridegroom's flower is another distinctive sign observed in the wedding ceremonies all over the country and up to our days. That was an artificial white and flower or rarer a natural flower. The bride, godfather, godmother or maids of honour (*druşte*) would fix the flower at the bridegroom's breast on Sunday morning, when the bridegroom's suite would come to take the bride to the religious ceremony. Among all the participants at the wedding, the bridegroom was the only one who wore his flower on the write side of his breast.

There is a varied terminology referring to the bridegroom's flower: *garland, colours, ţimir, bridegroom's bouquet* etc. Many times the bridegroom's flower was associated to money, a handkerchief embroidered and offered by the bride or ribbons.

According to very strict ceremonial rules, the bridegroom had to wear certain costume pieces. In Oltenia and Wallachia he had to wear a cotton but mostly raw silk kerchief that could be set in a certain manner: in diagonal, across the chest or around the neck with the ends hanging on the front or fixed on a shoulder. The three coloured ribbon and girdle or the richly decorated belt constituted specific pieces worn by the bridegrooms in Transylvania.

Other ritual textile pieces were the industrial kerchief with floral print made of hair or silk that the bridegroom would wear diagonally across the chest of on the shoulders; the embroidered handkerchief bordered by lace that the fiancée gave to her entrusted man; the red ribbon or the wool polychrome tassels fixed on the bridegroom's chest.

To these pieces one or two richly ornamented canteens (for brandy and wine) could be added.

Besides the costume pieces presented above, there was the custom of offering gifts at the wedding: the bride would prepare some ritual objects for the bridegroom and his family and the bridegroom would also bring something for the bride and her parents. These gifts were also mentioned in the dowry acts - when such acts existed - and there was a mutual exchange of ritual objects (named *exchanges*) that involved not only the protagonists of the wedding but their parents and godparents too. The exchange of gifts had a multifunctional character during the wedding ceremonial. They ensured the material basis of the future household, providing enough for a good start. At the same time, they meant a symbolic compensation for the girl's parents, whose daughter had to leave their house and deprive the family of a worker. Beyond their intrinsic economic or aesthetic value, gifts evidenced the new relations that were established between the two families and between the families and the other members of the community.

The gifts were prepared a long time before the wedding or in the period since engagement until the wedding and they meant "a vow" that consecrated the solidarity and mutual help network that strengthened the connections between the new family and the enlarged family, supporting the structural cohesion of the whole community.

At the same time, the gifts cemented the union of the incipient couple, making the two protagonists look more beautiful, wealthier and be more respected as members of a new alliance system that they were to use all their life from the wedding on.

The gifts that the fiancée prepared for her future husband to wear on their wedding day were costume pieces (a shirt named "bridegroom's shirt", *iţari* or *cioareci*, girdle, a richly adorned handkerchief) sewn carefully so as to serve as proofs of the girl's skill, talent and diligence.

A man sent by the bride (*vornicel*) took her ritual gifts to the bride the day before the wedding.

The epithalamiums of gift exchanges, frequent in Moldavia and Bucovina, contain references to the costume pieces that the bride offers to the bridegroom.

The text of one poem goes as follows: the bride goes to the fair in Cernăuţi but she doesn't find what she looks for so she goes to Stamboul and after a long search, she buys for the bridegroom:

"Three-coloured girdle
For your festive days
Cotton shirt
Sewn with artistry on the *ciupag*
Pants of tow
Sewn with artistry on the leg."[80]

When the bridegroom held his hand to take the gifts, the *vornicel* drew back, saying:

"Wait your highness
This is not possible
My brother
Don't hurry to take them
As you've hurried to marry..."[81]

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[79] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă (The Wedding Ceremonial Costume)*, in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri (Celebrations and Customs)*, vol. II, *Banat, Crişana, Maramureş*, p. 68-69.

[80] *** *Nunta la români. Oraţii (The Romanians' Wedding. Epithalamiums)*, p. 64.

[81] Simion Florea Marian, *Nunta la români (The Romanians' Wedding)*, p. 250.

Among the gifts prepared by the bride the "bridegroom's shirt" was the most important. It was made of different materials and ornamented according to the bride's material status and the local traditions.

Resistant materials - hemp, linen, hemp mixed with linen, hemp (warp) and cotton (filling), cotton and *jolj* (industrial thin cloth - were preferred in the regions Banat, Crişana, Maramureş and Transylvania for making the bridegroom's shirt.

In Moldavia the most used materials were prime wool cloth, thinly spun linen, and later cotton and raw silk. The materials could also be associated: linen with cotton, cotton with raw silk, wool with cotton. In the traditional community, hemp, linen and wool were considered materials invested with special magic powers.[82]

In Dobrudja, Wallachia and Oltenia a thinner cloth was used. It was made of different kinds of cotton, cotton combined with raw silk and with industrial fabric.

The bridegroom's shirt was actually the festive shirt of his ethnographic zone but more ornamented with sewn patterns and beads.

The most frequent ornamentation manner for the bridegroom's shirt was that with monochrome embroideries: *şabac* (*ajur*) sewn with cotton or white silk and later sewn patterns with coloured dyed cotton thread (mostly red or black) started to be used. Sometimes, the festive character of the bridegroom's shirt would be added to by the use of decorative sequins, beads and metallic thread.

Different persons could contribute to the sewing of the bridegroom's shirt: the bride, her close friends (young girls and married women), the bride's sisters, the girls at the spinning party, the bridegroom's mother and sisters and more rarely a specialized woman from the village or a maid with living parents.

As the questionnaires for the *AER* mention, in most zones in Romania the bride would sew the bridegroom's shirt. Her maids of honour and a few young wives would help her to prepare the gifts one or two weeks before the wedding. Evenings in a row, at the bride's house a sort of spinning party would be organized to help her cut and ornament the bridegroom's shirt. On that occasion, the folk music players would sing:

"Little leaf and still one leaf
Let the bridegroom come here
To get his ready shirt
The shirt is rough and full of knots
As in spinning party it was made
It was spun in spinning parties
When girls would look around for boys
It's a soft cotton shirt

Wedding canteen

Bride and godmother from the Târnave area

As the bridegroom's pretty handsome
And the bride is just his match."[83]

It is interesting that the community explains the custom of letting the bridegroom's mother sew her son's shirt by beliefs according to which the bride or her mother could cast a charm upon the shirt. In this case, during the wedding the bridegroom wore a shirt made by his mother and he put on the shirt given by the bride the next day after the ceremony.

The brides of today do not sew shirts for their bridegrooms anymore but the custom of preparing gifts for the bridegroom and his family is still in use, demonstrating the common wish to preserve at least some formal-spectacular aspects in the wedding ceremonial beyond all the natural changes dictated by the evolution of social life.

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[82] Doina Işfănoni, *Interferenţe dintre magic şi estetic* (*Interferences of Magic and Aesthetics*), p. 51.

[83] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă* (*The Wedding Ceremonial Costume*), in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri* (*Celebrations and Customs*), vol. III, *Transylvania*, p. 74.

A bride would carefully prepare gifts for the bridegroom's relatives: to her father in law she would give a shirt, to her mother in law – a female shirt, head kerchiefs or shirt sleeves to her sisters in law, handkerchiefs to her brothers-in-law and home woven cloth for a pair of sleeves to the other relatives. The bridegroom would offer to each of his parents in law a pair of boots. In our days, these gifts were replaced by things that are bought from the stores.

In Mehedinţi district, the mother in law would give to the bride a costume made of shirt, *creţ* (laps), *brăcire* (girdle), leggings and *opinci* (footwear) as a sign of acceptation in her new family. In her turn, the daughter in law had to wear that costume the next day after the wedding, when she would visit her parents.[84]

After the wedding, according to local tradition, the bridegroom's shirt was either kept and worn on festive occasions (great holidays, Easter, Pentecost, Christmas, Advent, New Year, Epiphany, weddings, church patrons' celebrations) or put in the dowry chest to serve as funeral costume piece. It could be used just like any other shirt but that was a rare case.

In most of the investigated villages, the bridegroom's shirt was kept for his funeral as there was the belief that the wife and the husband would recognize each other after death if they wore the same costume as their wedding costume.

All the costume pieces the bridegroom wore on his wedding day were absolutely new and specially made for that occasion with the most aesthetic elements.

Heavy overcoats made of fur and frieze were put over the immaculate white bridegroom's shirt, although they were usually meant for wearing during the winter: waistcoats, sheepskin coats, *sumane, şube.*

In some areas, the custom obliged the bridegroom to wear ceremonial overcoats irrespective of the season.

An obligatory piece in the bridegroom's costume, that he had to borrow if he couldn't afford to buy one, was the *suman* (*şubă* in the districts Vâlcea and Hunedoara, *zeche* in Braşov district, *ţundră* in Cluj district, *bubou* in the Land of Făgăraş). In the districts Braşov

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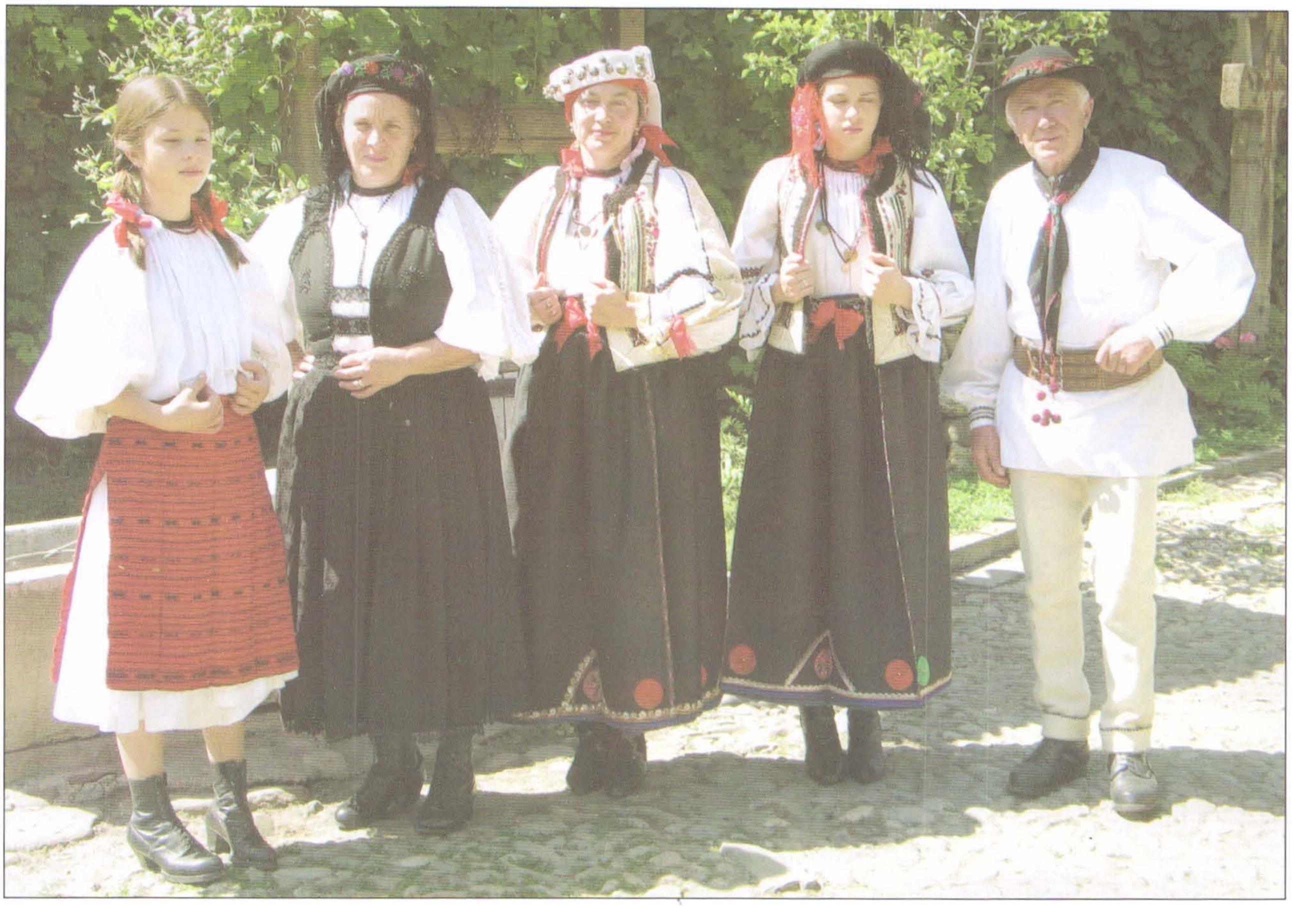
[84] Aurelia Ţiţă, *Contribuţii la interpretarea funcţiilor portului popular femeiesc din Izverna – Mehedinţi (Contributions to the Interpretation of the Functions of the Women's Folk Costume in Izverna, Mehedinţi district)*, p. 214.



Wedding guests from Rupea

and Hunedoara, a bridegroom would also wear a sewn up waistcoat and black calf leather boots with hard boot legs besides the white *şubă*.

In the Perşani zone, the *zeche* kept its ceremonial function not only at weddings but also during the spring ritual called *The Ploughman*. The following day after Easter, the headman of the young men's group, wearing a *zeche* fastened on around his waist and diagonally across his chest by a rope made of bunches of straws and a hat adorned by a green geranium leaf would be helped up on a harrow and taken by the whole village to the river. There he would go into the water accompanied by two young men of his group that forced him to lie down on his back in the water.[85]

Again in the Perşani zone, the waistcoat named *sewn up bundă* and made by the Saxon furriers in Rupea was obligatory for the bridegroom's costume.[86]

Bridegrooms in some villages in the districts Bihor, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Gorj and Mehedinţi wore obligatory hoods at their wedding.

În Teleorman district, the *casac* – an extremely elegant coat of thin cloth, long below the knee, sleeveless, with straight collar, lateral gores, decorated by black cord and flowers sewn with white, red and yellow dyed cotton over the cord, with sleeves and seams strengthened by cord and tied with laces and buttons – was an obligatory piece for the bridegroom.

Irrespective of the season, the bridegroom had to put on the wool *gubă with chiţe (long hairs)* in the districts Maramureş and Satu Mare, in order to be lucky with his flocks of sheep, as sheep were considered sacred. Other local custom required that the bridegroom should wear a hip long and sleeveless sheepskin coat adorned by *harast* (soft wool) feathers, with applied *irhă* and he should also wear a wide belt and a small kerchief.[87]

In Sibiu district, in the villages where shepherding constituted the basic occupation of the inhabitants, the *sarică* was obligatory in the ceremonial costume of the bridegroom.

Bridegrooms used to wear hoods in some villages in the zones Bihor, Năsăud, Gorj and Mehedinţi.

In Făgăraş zone, any bridegroom and bride would wear new waistcoats over which they put on the white *bubou* made of home woven thickened wool cloth.

The predominant colour in the decoration of the wedding costume is red, a widespread symbol of vitality and vigour which was also meant to defend the couple against physical and mental illness.

Brides in many areas would wear red ribbons braided in their hair, red boots, red girdles (Bran, Perşani), red *vâlnice* and shirts decorated predominantly with red motives (Mehedinţi), *catrinţe* with red background at Paloş (Rupea zone), red girdles worn as hoods in the villages in the south of Romania, white *gube* tied around the shoulders with red girdles at Săpânţa (Maramureş), red fezzes wherever this head cover was a part of the costume, red veil or veil pleated on a red thread, red *bete* and stockings, red bead necklaces etc; bridegrooms would also wear red kerchiefs around their shoulders at Paloş.

The bridegroom's hat or cap would be adorned by natural red flowers, red beads and red cotton tassels and by a red velvet *struţ* bought from the stores during the winter.

The kerchiefs with floral print that the bridegrooms would wear during the nuptial ceremony had also a red background.

By traditional norm, the wedding costume – as the whole wedding ceremonial – had particular forms in each ethnographic zone, its many variants displaying a wide range of rich and various ornamental systems with their consecrated symbolic meanings.

Many pieces that once were components of the traditional costume have been preserved up to the present only as elements of the ritual clothing. Among such pieces are the *vălitori*, former common head covers for the women in the Land of Olt preserved nowadays just for wearing at weddings and other big celebrations and the red *catrinţe* of the zone Avrig that are no longer usual costume pieces but are displayed on top of the bride's dowry together with a red girdle.

The ceremonial wedding costume is the most conservative folk costume since it still includes archaic elements. Although the ritual functions and meanings of these constitutive elements have been lost, they still preserve their symbolic meanings related to the wedding ceremony.

The differences of age and civil status were indicated by still other elements of the costume as the amplitude of the decorative fields of headdresses and shirts, the chromatic nuances selected and also the manner of wearing the headdresses.

In Perşani, there were differences of cut and ornament between a maid's shirt and a wife's shirt: The maid's shirt had *fodori* (*flounces*) over 15 centimetres long and its sleeves were ornamented on the pleats at the beginning of the flounces, collar and breast (below the collar). The wife's shirt had cuffs instead of flounces and longer sleeves that were raised above the elbows. The ornamental elements appeared on the shoulders, some of them common to the ornaments of the maid's shirt and some of them specific to mark the status of married women.

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[85] C. Irimie, *Portul popular din zona Perşanilor. Ţara Oltului (The Folk Costume of the Land of Olt. Perşani Zone)*, pp. 37-38.

[86] *Ibidem*, p. 17.

[87] Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul ceremonial de nuntă (The Wedding Ceremonial Costume)*, in *Sărbători şi obiceiuri (Celebrations and Customs)*, vol. II, *Banat, Crişana, Maramureş*, p. 66.

The *peană* across the elbow (a horizontal decorative row sewn at elbow level) was larger and embroidered with coloured beads at the maid's shirt in Şanţ (Bistriţa-Năsăud district) while the *peană* at the wife's shirt was narrower and decorated by patterns sewn with black cotton (*farbă*). The lace that bordered the sleeve flounces was richer at the maid's shirt.

The decorative border at the laps of the front apron was wider and richly ornamented by multicoloured sewn patterns for maids while for women it was narrower, its patterns sewn with threads of fewer colours.

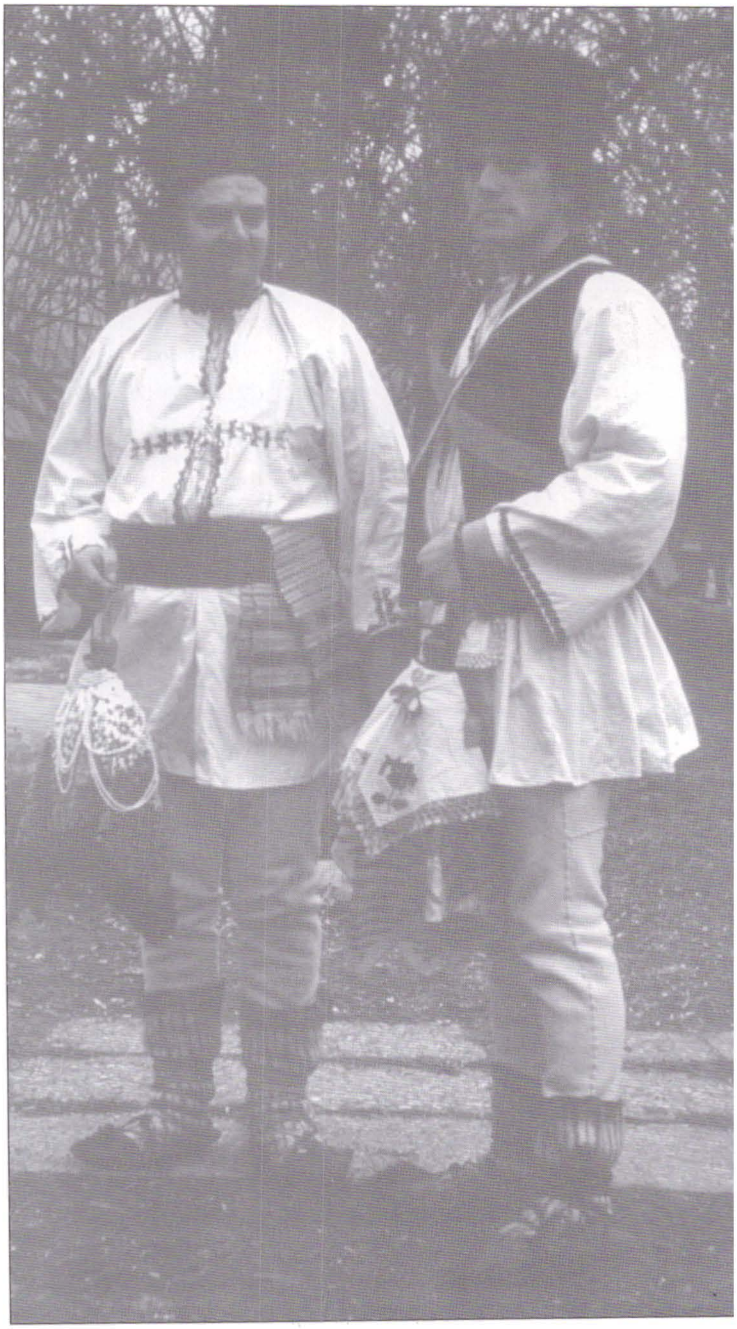
Similar differences can also be noticed with regard to the costumes of young unmarried and married men. The shirts of unmarried men in Perşani had cuffed sleeves and minutely pleated laps ended by crocheted triangles. The artistic seam that attached the sleeves to the shoulder line was executed with a "braided little key" technique. The shirt neck was adorned all around by buds. Married men wore shirts with large loose sleeves and much less decorated.

Married women in Bran zone would have a headdress composed of a coloured cloth *căiţă* tied under the chin and a head kerchief made of thin cloth or raw silk and ornamented by woven patterns. Young wives would adorn their *căiţă* along the front margin by ten brightly coloured woollen tassels and by beads, enhancing the decorative effect of the headdress.

The manner of wearing the head kerchief was also an indicator of the age opposition between young women and mature women. For example, in Mehedinţi district, the first ten years after marriage a woman would fix her kerchief to the upper margin of the *conci* by hairpins. The kerchief would be stitched to the *conci* by its middle so as its free margins would hang down freely to the middle of the back. This manner of wearing the kerchief was specific for young married women. The more mature wives wrapped the kerchief around their face leaving just a third of it to hang freely down the back.[88]

Another element used to mark the age difference was the colour used for the ornamentation of the female head covers. For example, the festive triangular *tulpan* made of cloth, linen, *nansuc*, marquisette, muslin etc. was adorned by differently coloured beads sewn at the top of the crocheted little triangles: white and red beads for young wives, green and violet for mature women (aged 40-45) and black for old women.

The few examples presented above illustrate the multiple functionality of the costume and the various symbolic meaning of each costume element.



Shepherds from Mărginimea Sibiului at a wedding

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[88] Aurelia Tiţă, *Contribuţii la interpretarea funcţiilor portului popular femeiesc din Izverna – Mehedinţi (Contributions to the Interpretation of the Functions of the Women's Folk Costume in Izverna, Mehedinţi district)*, p. 212.

The close connections between the numerous functions of the folk costume - practical-utilitarian, aesthetic, social, ritual and ceremonial - reflect in the immediate change that the alteration of one function induces upon all the other functions.

Another differentiating aspect of the costume refers to the occupation of the costume owner. There has been a strong link between the natural environment conditions and the occupation of people and both factors influenced significantly the structure of the costume.

The clime, relief and quality of the soil in the Danube Plain were natural factors that favoured the development of agriculture ever since the dawns of civilization. The mountainous areas, abounding in natural pastures, ensured optimal conditions for cattle breeding, which was one of the main traditional occupations of the Romanians.

In the course of history, the costume varied according to the fluctuations of civilization but most of all to the economic activity of people, as the traditional Romanian occupations: agriculture and cattle breeding set their mark upon the practical function of clothing.

The professional costume has proved to be most conservative, as for a time span of several generations has not changed essentially. The professional clothing attributes have been preserved up to our day. For example, the shepherd's costume was made exclusively of home-woven and processed material and it was perfectly adapted to the occupation of the owner (shepherding), marking also his provenience zone.

Nevertheless, there were also common costume pieces for the shepherds on all zones and these were the hat, the cap, the sewn-up waistcoat, the *sarică* and the *opinci with leggings.*

As it had to be impregnated by certain substances and processed according to certain techniques in order to have greater resistance to bad weather and long routes, the shepherd costume had its distinctive notes. His hat would never be of straw but of hair (prime quality wool), as such a material allowed processing in order to be resistant under the difficult circumstances of mountain life.

In Maramureş, Harghita and on the Someş Valley[89] - to pick just a few examples - hats were impregnated with lamb or kid blood so as not to loose shape and they were salved with a mixture of fir tree resin, sheep butter and wax or with boiled resin or with sheep or ox fat which rendered them waterproof. People fixed their hats against the wind with strings tied under the chin.

In the Argeş district, the shepherd hats were salved at the exterior with sheep milk or sunflower seed oil to be more resistant to bad weather.[90]

In Maramureş, the shepherd's *clop* was adorned on holidays by a leather strip fixed around the calotte on which brass buttons were sewn. Another leather strip under the chin was used to fix the hat on the head.[91]

In the zone of Năsăud, white or black hemp threads and small copper chains (forming *răteze*) would ornament the shepherd's hat.[92]

In the winter, shepherds would wear big sheep or lamb fur caps (*shepherd caps*) with flattened tops that gave them a cylindrical form.

The shepherd's shirts and summer trousers were made of hemp and blackened by boiling them in a concoction of alder bark and copper sulphate (*galascău* - synthetic black dye). When they had gone up to the mountains, the shepherds would boil their shirts and trousers in zhey and they salved them by butter boiled in sheep fat. Thus the texture got grey towards black and became very resistant and waterproof.

In Harghita, the shepherds salved their shirts with cauldron ashes mixed with sheep butter.[93]

In Maramureş, the *smolenci* (as locals named their shirts and thin trousers) constituted signs of both distinction and professional identification. "The one who comes down the mountains not wearing *smolenci* is not a true shepherd" or "To shepherds, the *smolenci* are like real festive clothes" the informants from the commune Vadu Izei would underline.[94]

In the winter, shepherds would wear *cioareci* made of black or white frieze. The shepherd *cioareci* of the Land of Vrancea were made of thickened white cloth and they were called *iţari* "without front" as they had symmetrical lateral gores that made the back and the front of the trousers identical.[95]

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[89] Mihai Dăncuş, *Zona etnografică Maramureş (The Maramureş Ethnographic Zone)*, p. 167: Pompei Boca, *Portul popular din Ilva Mare şi Lunca Ilvei - zona Năsăud (The Folk Costume in Ilva Mare and Lunca Ilvei - Năsăud Zone)*, p. 216; Ion Nistor, *Aspecte ale vieţii sociale şi spirituale a păcurarului în zona Năsăudului (Aspects of the Shepherds' Social and Spiritual Life in the Năsăud Zone)*, p. 462.

[90] Gheorghe Reteganul, *Păstoritul în Dâmboviţa (Shepherding in the Dâmboviţa District)*, p. 438.

[91] Mihai Dăncuş, *Zona etnografică Maramureş (The Maramureş Ethnographic Zone)*, p. 167.

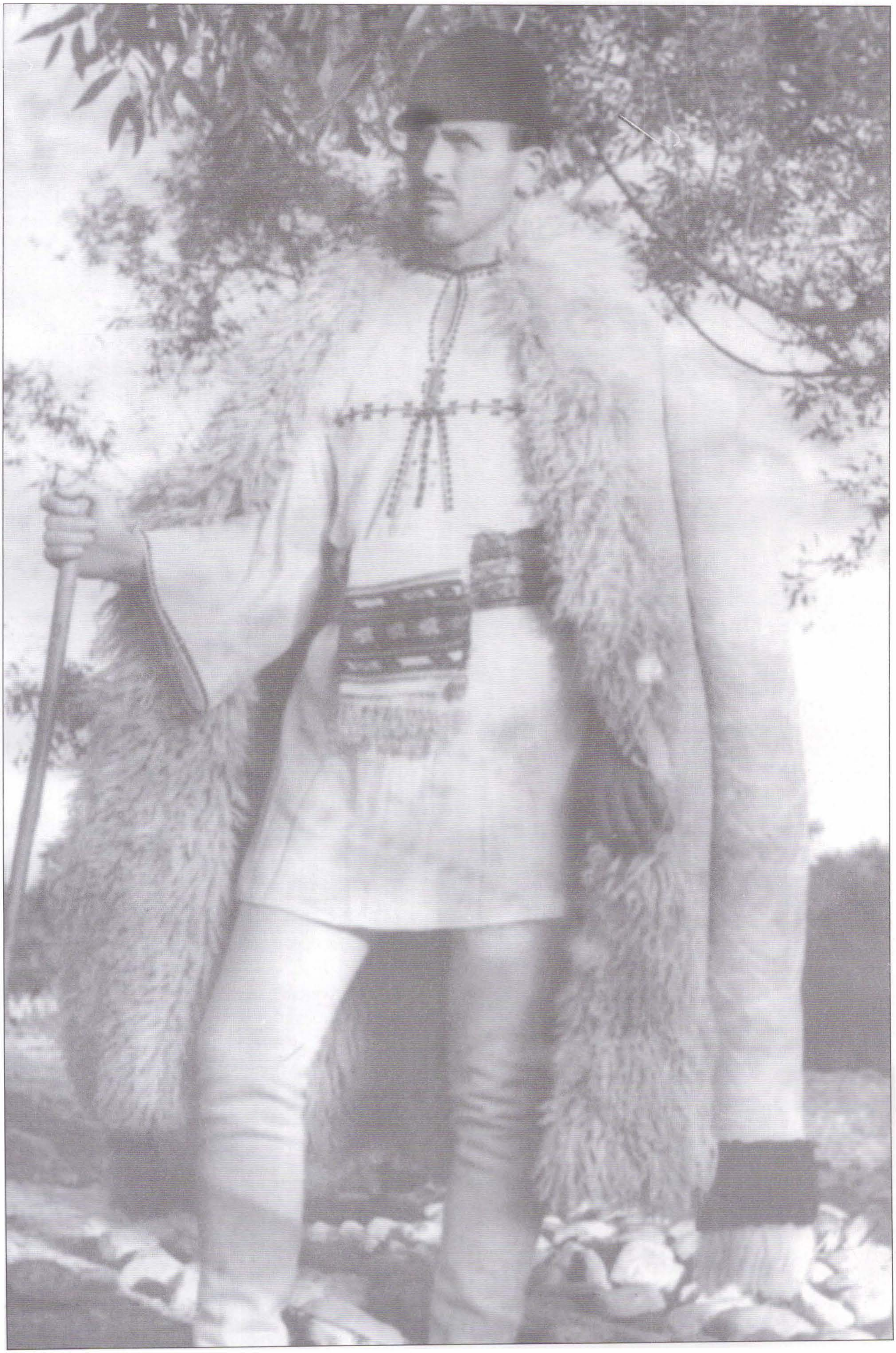
[92] Viorica Pascu, *Consideraţii asupra evoluţiei portului popular din Transilvania (Considerations on the Evolution of the Folk Costume in Transylvania)*, p. 199.

[93] Silv. Moldovan, *Ardealul II. Ţinuturile de pe Mureş (Transylvania II. The Counties on the Mureş Valley)*, p. 15.

[94] Mihai Dăncuş, *Zona etnografică Maramureş (The Maramureş Ethnographic Zone)*, p. 167.

[95] Fl. Bobu Florescu, *Portul popular din Ţara Vrancei (The Folk Costume in the Land of Vrancea)*, p. 84.

Mărginimea Sibiului shepherd on a festive day →



Because of the colder clime, the shepherds in the villages of Bessarabie would wear sheepskin trousers during the winter. These trousers had the short cut fur on the inside and they were called *meşini* locally.

As footwear, the shepherds would wear frieze leggings reddened with red alder bark concoction in order to be more resistant and waterproof. They would fix their leggings on the legs by white goat hair straps. They would also put on home crafted *opinci* made of pig or cow skin.

For the shepherds in the Năsăud zone, a usual coat was the *gub*, a white frieze *suman* woven in the technique in the four threads and provided with lateral gores called "wings". This type of overcoat had a wide turned up collar decorated by black string of twisted wool forming small circular patterns. A wide collar attached to the *suman* served to protect the shepherds against the rain and as a bag for keeping food.

The economic differences among shepherds reflected in their clothing, the festive costume of the well-off including expensive ample overcoats decorated with precious fur trimmings in the areas Bran, Săcele, Şcheii Braşovului, Covasna and Întorsura Buzăului.

Some remarkably industrious inhabitants of the settlements in Săcele area reached a flourishing economic status and got to own numerous flocks of prime sheep (up to 6,000 animals), cattle herds (up to 400) and big horse herds (200 to 800 animals).

According to my 1987 research, on holidays, the rich shepherds of Săcele wore felt black hats with round calottes and large rims slightly turned up and bordered by rep. Another black rep ribbon ended by a buckle would mark the end of the calotte.

In the winter they wore peaked black or grey lamb fur caps while the poorer men would wear smaller whiter and rounder caps.

The male shirt – made of home woven cotton cloth – had a straight 10 centimetres wide collar fastened by white lace and it was cut of two sheets (a back one and a front one) with three lateral gores on each side. The sleeves – made of one sheet and a half each – were large and ended by 9 centimetres wide cuffs closed by two buttons each. It was richly decorated by fine patterns sewn with white or yellow silk thread and with golden or silver thread on the collar and cuffs (*pumnii*).

The male shirts were fastened on by yellow or white home woven wool girdles and by a wide leather belt over them. Other men would wear *chimire* richly decorated by multicoloured braided strips of leather.

The *cioareci*, tight on the legs, were made of home woven thickened prime wool cloth.

As footwear, men used sheep or goat leather boots on working days and calf leather boots on holidays.

The men in Săcele wore a vest over the shirt. It was called *jiletcă* and it was made of dark blue cloth ("from the store") or black cloth (home woven).

The overcoats of the rich men in Săcele were *zăbune* made of industrial blue cloth, long below the knees and decorated by black cord Brandenburg patterns.

The less wealthy wore brown frieze *zăbune* with 8 centimetres wide collars straight around the neck. Such an overcoat would have the back cut of one sheet (46 centimetres wide and 68 centimetres long) and the front cut of two halves of a sheet. The large loose sleeves were made of one sheet each. Lateral straight gores and triangular *pave* (with sides of 14 and 12 centimetres respectively) under the armpits enlarged the coat. The *zăbun* was ornamented by cord (made of imported black silk threads by specialized craftsmen in Şcheii Braşovului) on the collar, breast, along the front opening, on the pockets and sleeve margins.

On holidays, the rich men in Săcele wore white homespun cloth *antirie* ornamented by black cord on the collar, breast and sleeves. This type of overcoat was specific for the well-off free peasants. In the winter they would wear black homespun cloth *ghebe* ankle long and lined by lamb fur. The *ghebe* were decorated by two-three rows of black cord on the collars, sides of the breast and laps.[96]

Shepherds were looked up by the rural community. As Silvestru Moldovan pointed out, when the shepherds came down the mountains into the village they would dance with the richest girls who were happy to "have been able to dance with the black shirted shepherd".[97]

Some shepherds reached such a wealthy state that they cold afford to be church founders. An interesting example is the church in Titirleşti (Mehedinţi district), raised "... with the shepherds' money and having a shepherd as symbolic image".[98]

The well-off shepherds in Săcele had close connections to those in the Szeklers's area and founded many churches like the wooden one in Zagon raised in 1814 and having as a founder the shepherd Zaharia Pârvu. Another example is the 1795 church of Dobârlău founded by Bucur Petru, another shepherd in Săcele. "Moisă Ciută, a rich Săcele shepherd, founded the church in Întorsura Buzăului raised in the period 1836-1840 to honour the shepherds and the locals".[99]

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[96] Informer Siţa Jerău, aged 66, Satulung.

[97] Silvestru Moldovan, *Ardealul II. Ţinuturile de pe Mureş* (*Transylvania II. The Counties on the Mureş Valley*), p. 15.

[98] *** *Dări de seamă de Nicolae Iorga, Ştefan Meteş. Păstorii ardeleni în Principatele Române* (*Accounts by Nicolae Iorga, Ştefan Meteş. Transylvanian Shepherds in the Romanian Principalities*), p. 261.

The costume of the peasant frontier guards was another type of professional costume. The founding of the frontier guards regiments under the Habsburg dynasty in the 18th and 19th centuries drew about important changes in the life of Romanian rural communities, influencing their cultural level and also their clothing as men in the frontier guards regiments had the status of free men and benefited from all the additional privileges granted by the Austrian monarchy to the free men.

Initially, the frontier guard costume was made of the pieces of the local costume. For example, frontier guards in Șercaia - Land of Oltului wore shirts with high collar around the neck, adorned with white embroideries and sleeves ended at their inferior extremity by cuffs (*pumnicei*). They wore white frieze *cioareci*, ornamented by floral patterns made with cord on the lateral sides, sewn up waistcoats richly adorned on the breast, sheepskin coats with sleeves, white *frigiuri* and grey or black *zechii*. On cold days or long journeys they put on *sarici* and they wore *opinci*.

The women in the frontier guards' families adopted some expensive costume pieces bought from stores or ordered at the local craftsmen. For example, they wore *scurteici* and *bunde* bordered with fox or polecat fur trimmings. These coats were only within the reach of well-off social categories.[100]

It is worth mentioning that as free men, the frontier guards of Șercaia chose in fact to wear the specific nobleman costume of the Land of Olt while their wives adopted a costume that included urban pieces.

In the county Năsăud, the equipment of the frontier guard was also a variant of the local folk costume but had pieces adapted to military needs. Men in the force would wear black felt hats with round calotte and wide rims, slightly turned up and during the winter they covered their heads by peaked black lamb fur caps with the tops slanted to the left.

They wore linen or hemp cloth shirts with sleeves ended by cuffs (*pocmeti*) and thin fabric trousers or white *cioareci* tight on the legs laterally ornamented by blue braid (*petea*), which was a distinctive sign of the frontier guard costume.

Another piece in the costume of the frontier guards was the grey or black frieze tunic (specific for the military) or the black frieze *suman* with narrow collar, long below the knees, with lateral gores and bordered by black *petea*. They put on *opinci* of tanned cow leather and black frieze leggings fastened by leather straps that wrapped the legs up to the knees.[101]

In time, the frontier guard costume included a series of changes imposed by the military with the aim of unifying costumes and including them into the army pattern. All members of the frontier guards wore jackets, trousers and high boots. Only the colour of collars and buttons differed from one regiment to another.

Specialized village tailors made some pieces of the frontier guard costume with materials - wool and leather - brought by the families of the clients. Other costume pieces were home made according to the prescribed model. In time, the whole equipment was bought with money from a special fund (*fond de mondire*) to which all the frontier guards contributed. This fund provided them with military uniforms made of a finer cloth and with boots with short boot legs.[102]

The every day costume of the frontier guard peasant went through many changes including costume pieces with urban cut. Instead of the long *suman*, he started to wear the *chit*, a shorter tailored coat and then the *căput*, a coat with urban cut. He replaced his *opinci* by army boots, high boots or normal boots, wore shorter shirts and narrower belts with two buckles instead of the former wide leather belt.[103]

Generally, we can assume that the equipment of the frontier guard peasant was initially constituted of elements of the local clothing specific to the category of free men to which some characteristics of the military uniform were added.

The folk costume reflects infinite and dense levels of perceiving the Romanian spirit by knowing the language of the forms and plastic signs that adorn people's clothing especially on festive and ritual occasions.

There is a relation of interdependence[104] between the form and functions of the costume, the form depending on the function so that we should agree that the "clothing structure has (...) systemic character and is dictated by meaning structures".[105]

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[99] Ioan Lăcătuș, *Identitate și cultură la românii din Secuime (Identity and Culture at the Romanians in the Szecklers' Area)*, p. 109.

[100] George Maior, *O pagină din luptele românilor cu sașii pe terenul social, cultural și economic, Șercaia, 1809-1909 (A Page in the Battles of Romanians against Saxons on the Social, Cultural and Economic Fields. Șercaia)*, p. 27.

[101] Pompei Boca, *Portul popular din Ilva Mare (The Folk Costume in Ilva Mare)*, p. 214.

[102] V. Șotropa, *Districtul grăniceresc năsăudean (The Frontier Guard District of Năsăud)*, p. 118.

[103] Pompei Boca, *Portul popular din Ilva Mare (The Folk Costume in Ilva Mare)*, p. 214.

[104] P.G. Bogatirev, *The Functions of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia*, Paris, 1971.

[105] Radu Niculescu, *Repere ale unei teorii structural-semiotice a culturii populare materiale (Milestones of a Structural-Semiotic Theory on the Material Folk Culture)*, p. 27

Analyzing the dialectic relation between form and function, Tancred Bănăţeanu, a reputed Romanian theoretician of folk art stressed the fact that "the form is... a determinant of the ornamental fields and of the ornamental composition on which ornaments depend symbiotically at stylistic level and on which the chromatic range and composition also depends – within a complex creative vision".[106]

The costume creates an image of the three-dimensional human body, generating forms, supporting it and adjusting its volume and dimensions to the size and configuration of the body.

The characteristic fundamental traits that base the putting together of a costume are the correlations between shape and cut, shape and material, shape and decorative composition and also between shape and functions.

The sculpture-like character of the Romanian folk costume is given by its rectangular components, vertically placed and supported by the linear dynamic ornamental rhythm.

The chromatic and compositional balance of the costume is determined by the alternation of the white background spaces and the decorative fields organized in wider or narrower rectangular strips horizontally or vertically placed. The proportions, harmony and refinement of the colours and the change of focus from a certain element to another are other attributes that add to the distinguished image of the costume.

The manner of covering the women's heads – differing according to the wearer's age, the season and occasion of wearing – by ample rectangular types of kerchiefs that frame the face in soft fabric folds revealing the delicacy and femininity of peasants contributes to the suggestion of a gallery of individualized human portraits.

The special plasticity of the costume is also determined by the perfect tuning of the pieces that cover the body from the waist down (*catrinţe, fote, vâlnice*) and the pieces for the upper part of the body as the former are heavier and more rigid and the latter are lighter and more elastic.

The manner and placing of the ornamental motives that had magic and symbolic significance in the past crystallized in plastic patterns and in stable artistic languages preserved by tradition up to our days.

The aesthetic dimension of the folk costume has always been related to its utility. Even the simplest and unornamented costume piece has its intrinsic beauty that reflects in its shape and structure. The aesthetic quality of costume pieces had strengthened and amplified in time especially in the case of festive clothing.

On the great calendar feasts – Christmas, Easter, Pentecost – or at fairs, church festive days, weddings and even at the round dance of the village, girls would compete to adorn their garments with new patterns (*izvoade*) that created the bright holiday atmosphere of the events they took part into. A folk costume was "alive" as it was worn daily and adapted to the social and psychological context that determined its appearance and facilitated its natural development.

Therefore equilibrated clothing assembles were created in point of composition and chromatics and they were made of functional-decorative pieces that were associated on the bases of the aesthetic laws of folk culture.

A costume has aesthetic value first by the semantic content of its function and second by its relation to the taste and artistic conception of the ethnic group the folk creator belongs to and feels totally integrated in.

One generation after another of folk creators have chiseled and transmitted along centuries their spirit of synthesis, balance, proportion, taste for aesthetic forms and plastic harmony, all these reflected in the cut of costumes, in the richness and amplitude of the ornamental fields, in the refinement of colours, in the dosage and combination of the decorations and in the art of dressing up and wearing the folk costumes.

Such a plastic expressiveness of the costume has been achieved by stylistic decantation of centuries that lead to the synthesizing, polishing and simplifying of the costume pieces until they reached a quintessence of functionality and beauty.

Aesthetics and ethics have always been intertwined in the people's mentality as beauty has always been subordinated to the community's moral values on which the whole existence of the traditional village was based. Any creative process had moral content as it observed the ethic norms and principles of the community that were deeply anchored in its historic, social and spiritual reality.

An individual who lived within a traditional society had to obey the moral code that characterized the epoch and the people and it was above individuals and beyond their will.

The peasant costume reflects a way of life in which the social unities (family, group, and community), their psychology, philosophy, mentality and forms of artistic expression have always assembled coherently forming an indestructible unity.

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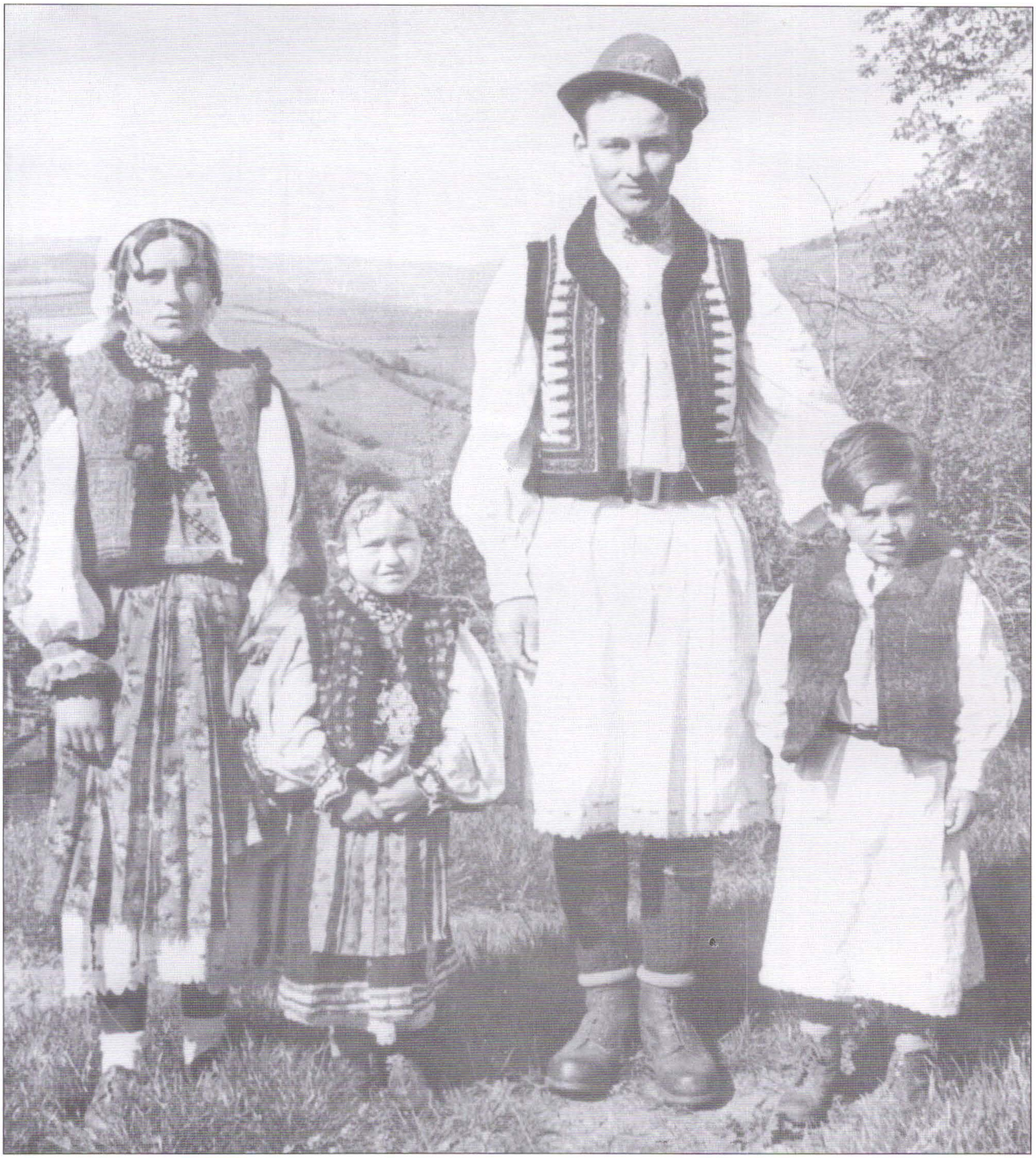
[106] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Prolegomene la o teorie a esteticii artei populare* [*Prolegomena to a Theory on the Aesthetics of Folk Art*], p. 138.

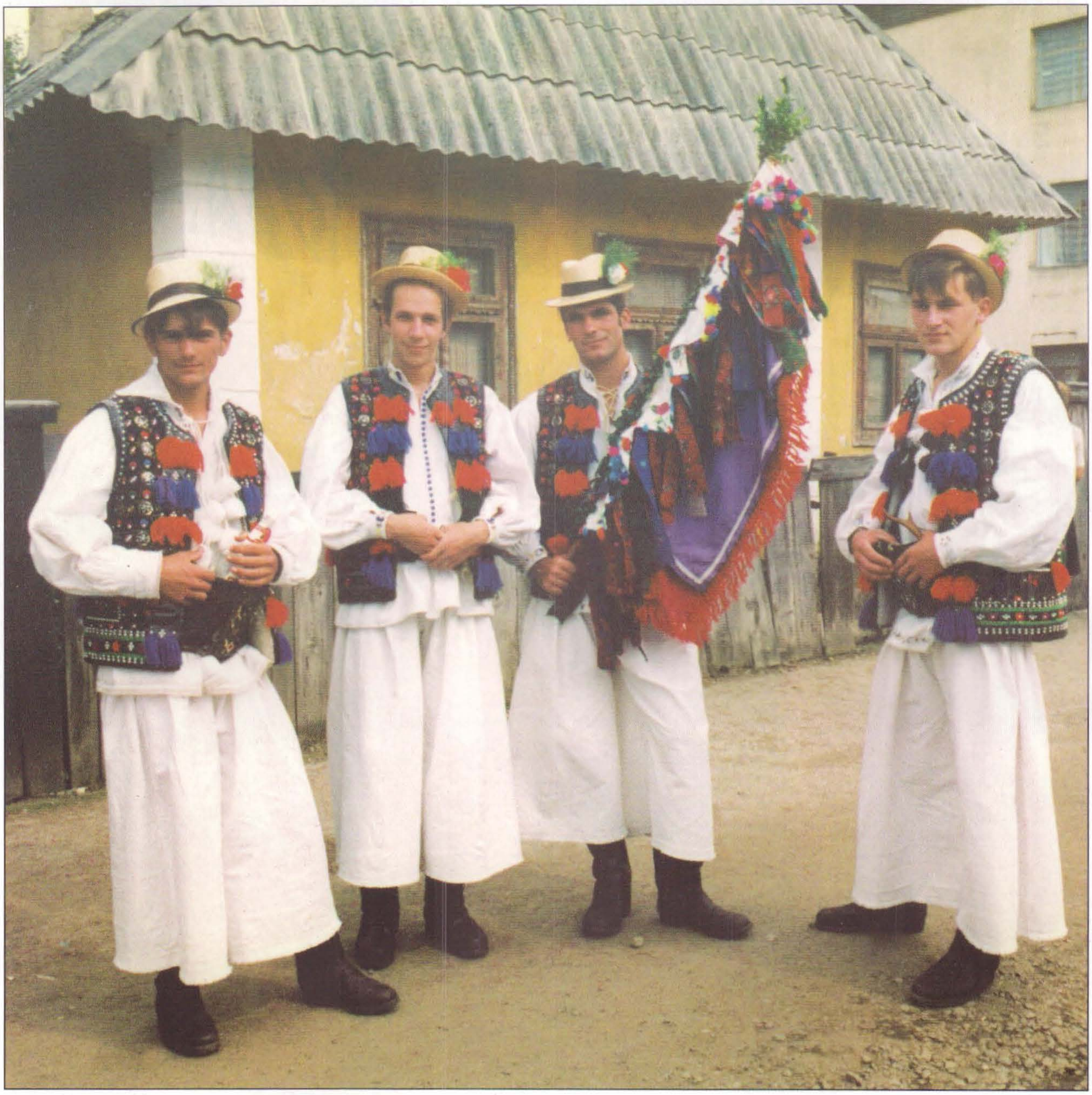
Each ethnic costume is like a highly significant document on the specific way that ethnic group understands and expresses beauty and a world view by conceiving and producing decorative values.

The Romanian ethnic group had characteristic sensitivity, openness and creative force that have always been manifest within the peasant communities as their members have tried to enrich and perfect their own cultural background by assimilating and creatively processing their contacts and cultural exchanges with other civilization areas.

By presenting the clothing symbols, I have added to my scientific approach concrete examples of the representative Romanian zones so as to reveal the multiple functionality of the folk costume and the way in which rural communities have transformed those symbols in order to respond to the evolving social and economic status of the people and to the local-zonal traditions.



A family from Pădurenii Hunedoarei wearing their festive costumes



The folk costume nowadays

It is important to debate the preservation, protection and promotion of the folk costume in the contemporary age in order to point out a few necessary differences and nuances that would enhance our knowledge regarding the authentic and specific fund of costume values and the role of the folk costume as core identity symbol. Such a debate is also useful as a cultural and economic strategy should be drawn out to maintain the aesthetic purity, accuracy and authenticity of peasant clothing.

Folk costumes have not only intrinsic value, but also an extrinsic one, as they mark the perennial ethnic identity that should be permanently studied looking back to the spiritual origin of Romanians.

The Romanian folk costume suffered deep changes after the First and especially the Second World War as result of the circulation of industrial products within villages, of using new materials and techniques and chemical dye instead of vegetal colouring substances. The folk artistic creation was altered by the penetration of hybrid artificial elements that were not adequate to the traditional peasant style. The alteration of the costume was even deeper due to the circulation within village environment of albums with so-called "national motives" and sample catalogues edited by the Houses of Commerce for the Textile and Colorants Industry that were completely incongruent to the authentic folk art.[1]

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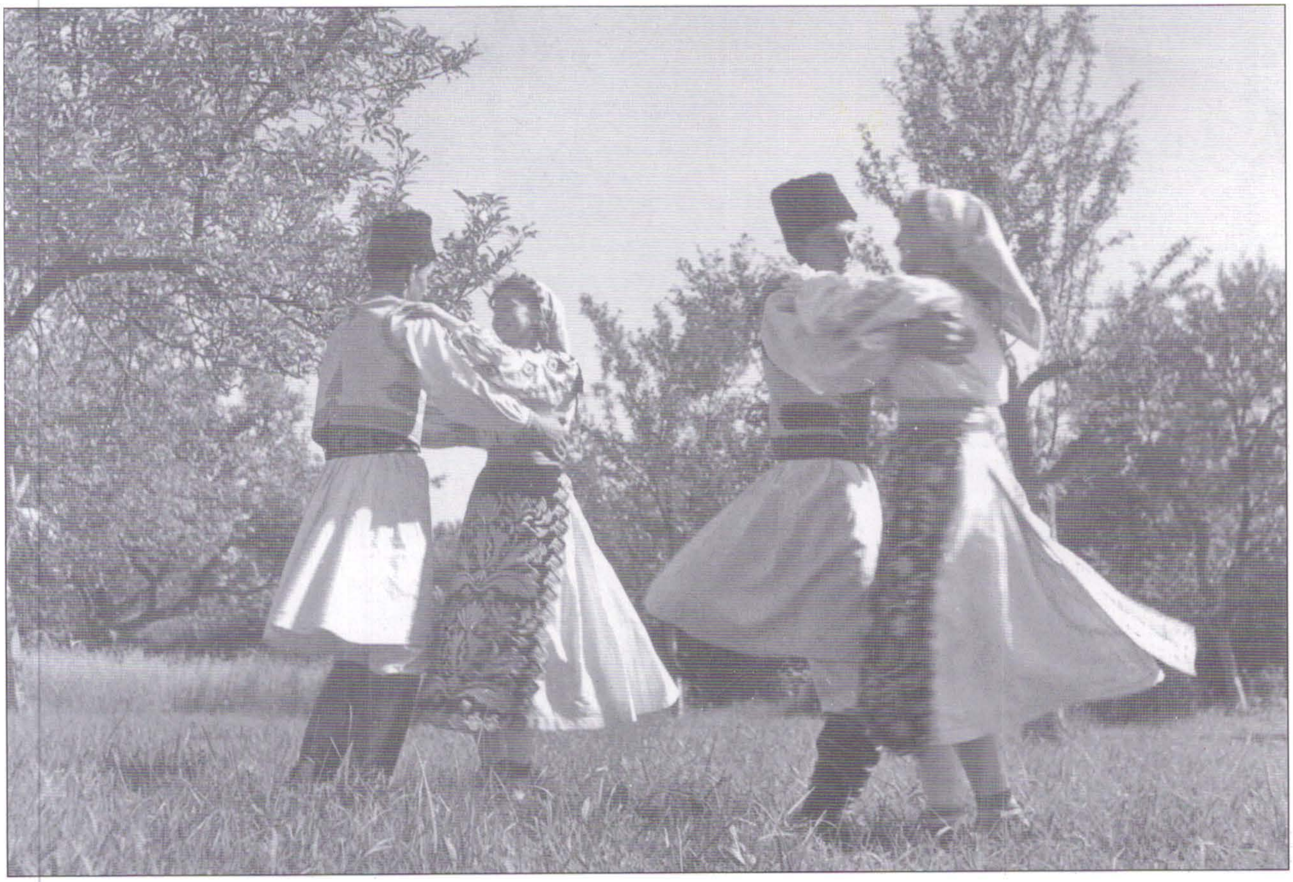
[1] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Portul popular din regiunea Maramureş. Zonele Oaş, Maramureş, Lăpuş (The Folk Costume in the Maramureş Region. Zones Oaş, Maramureş, Lăpuş)*, p. 18.



People from Banat engaged in a folk dance

↖ *Standard bearer and wedding "callers" from Vadu Izei (Maramureş)*

However, the negative phenomenon mentioned above was not so intense and wide spread in all the ethnographic zones of Romania. It occurred in different degrees in each area, depending on local historic and social-economic traditions and on the closer or scarcer contact with towns.

The mutations and transformations of the folk costume lead to the diminishing of the household textile industry and to the disappearance of certain pieces of the work folk costume that were replaced by elements of town clothing.

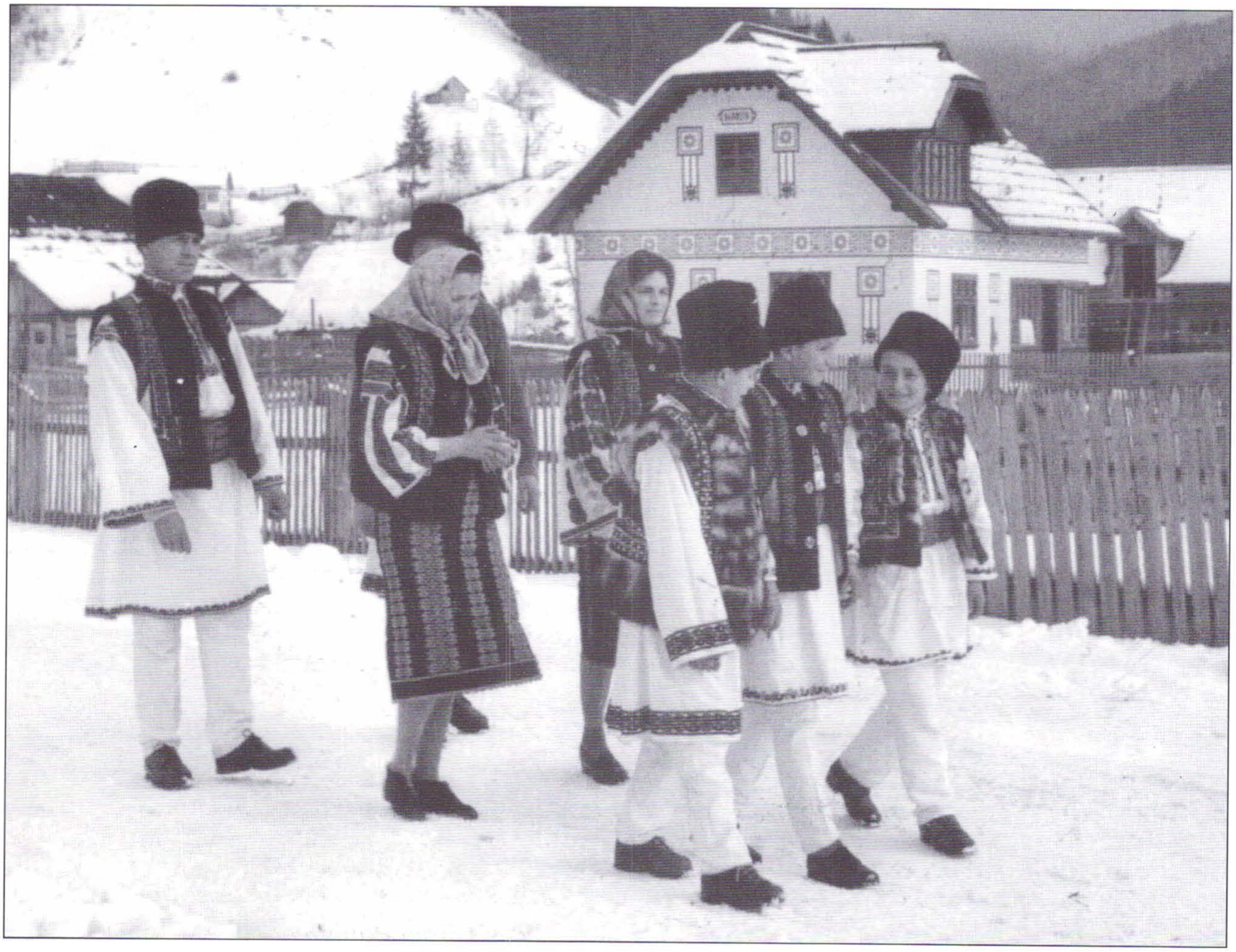
By its preponderantly aesthetic attributes, the festive traditional clothing has proved more conservative and more resistant to the competition and aggressiveness of the much cheaper urban costume pieces. The duration of the festive folk costume is explained by its functions of representing the inclusion of the costume wearer into a certain local community, of marking the festive occasion and of aesthetically expressing – by shape, ornamental and chromatic details – the personality and uniqueness of individuals.

At the beginning of the 20th century and especially after the First World War, the folk costumes ceased to be worn daily and gradually they were worn only by the aged and then only on festive occasions as they didn't correspond any longer to the changes in the rural way of life.

Folk costumes were faster excluded from the daily village life in the plain zones in the south and east of Romania as these areas had been crossed since early times by important commercial paths that facilitated the circulation of cultural goods.

The manufacturing industry invaded Romanian villages by offering people different fabrics – printed calcio, velvet, silk, industrial cloth, jewels – that estranged them from the authentic models that had resulted out of millenary sedimentation and had represented a system of constituted values.

Essential mutations have occurred in the mentality of people belonging to village communities and they adopted a new aesthetic orientation that favoured the urban clothing fashion, which was more comfortable,



On a Sunday in the Bucovina region

practical, cheaper and its products were easier to obtain.

As Mihai Pop remarked, in time "As well as the urban society, the rural society has become a consumption society. People produce for the market and they consume market goods. They wear clothes bought from towns"[2], as town life has become a social model of comfort and superior civilization for villagers. The community values have gradually been replaced by the standardized town products and clothing becomes (along other folk culture categories such as literary folklore, folk music and dancing) a cultural consumption good.

As sociologist Traian Herseni pertinently notices: "...as fashion and imitation have become possible, they are about to create a new life style".[3]

The shift of aesthetic taste has set its mark upon the craft of making and ornamenting folk costumes. Mutations of shape and ornamentation were determined by the interruption of tradition at the confrontation of old models and new tendencies.

As far as chromatics is concerned, shocking combinations of bright and even strident colours have got into fashion along with the excessive crowding of the ornamental fields. Such a "strident, old-fashioned decorative style" has been motivated by the "industrial serialization of some folk art objects that often ignores the most elementary aesthetic exigencies" according to aesthetician Grigore Smeu.[4]

Being a part of the ethnographic heritage and of the artistic treasure of an ethnic group, the folk traditional costumes should be protected, preserved and promoted.

In Romania, folk costumes representing all the local-zonal variants and species have been preserved in museums of ethnography and folk art. The most precious folk costume collections date back to the 18th and 19th centuries.

At the same time, folk costumes constitute the object of scientific research conducted by specialists who work in academic institutions, in museums with research departments, in faculties with ethnology departments, in the National Centre for the Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture and in the specialized centres in each district.

At the same time, folk costumes are constantly promoted at national level observing scientific criteria established by specialized ethnographers in different institutions among which UCECOM is the most important with its special department where folk costumes are made by using authentic techniques and styles according to the morphologic, decorative, compositional and chromatic principles that form the clothing tradition of each ethnographic zone.[5]

The most famous co-operative societies that produce folk costumes or folk clothing pieces for the domestic and foreign markets are *Mioriţa* (Iaşi district) *Marama musceleană* (Câmpulung Muscel), *Haţegana* (Haţeg) *Suceviţa* (Rădăuţi), those of Tismana, (Gorj district), Negreşti-Oaş (Satu Mare district), Breaza (Prahova Valley), Curtea de Argeş, Piatra Neamţ etc. In the running of these co-operatives extremely competent ethnographers, designers, craftsmen and talented folk creators are involved.

The act of promoting folk costumes requires previous knowledge and understanding of the system of traditional signs in order to get the right code for observing the function and meaning of each costume piece as well as for using the appropriate artistic language to express the coherence of the aesthetic message of each costume.

In our days, there are folk creators who have specialized in crafting and ornamenting folk costumes and work by special order from folk music singers or players who have particular requests that sometime explain the excessive decoration and the violent colours that make such costumes lack authenticity. Far from being new folk creations, they degrade the traditional style reflecting the lack of artistic and technical exigencies of these particular craftsmen.

As André Lurçat underlines "...an ornament has the role of animating, modulating, enriching, drawing attention upon a certain spot, provoking an accent, stressing a form, containing a symbolic significance".[6]

Keeping the above quotation in mind, we understand that the clumsy accumulation of ample ornamental motives that often imitate roughly natural elements is deeply discordant against the simplicity of the cut and the fundamental aesthetical norms of folk art that impose the alternation of filled and empty spaces as emptiness is a rhythmical factor integrated into the artistic vision of the creator.

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[2] Mihai Pop, *Folclor românesc* (*Romanian Folklore*), vol. I, p. 242.

[3] Traian Herseni, *Individ şi societate în satul Fundu Moldovei* (*Individual and Society in the Village Fundu Moldovei*), p. 143.

[4] Grigore Smeu, *Repere estetice în satul românesc* (*Aesthetical Milestones in the Romanian Village*), pp. 160-161, 163.

[5] Paul Petrescu; Paul Stahl, *Obiecte de artă populară produse de cooperativele meşteşugăreşti* (*Folk Art Objects Produced by the Craftsmanship Cooperatives*), p. 42; Georgeta Stoica; Olga Horşia, *Meşteşuguri artistice tradiţionale* (*Traditional Artistic Crafts*), pp. 204-205.

[6] A. Lurçat, *Formes, compositions et lois d'harmonie*, p. 161.

As regarding the securing of the continuity of the folk costume in order to preserve its aesthetic value, it is important that folk costumes should circulate, be worn and promoted.

In our days, the main promoters of folk costumes are the folk music singers and players, the members of musical and choreographic folk groups and the actors who incarnate rural characters in films, theatre plays and television shows that are broadcasted both in Romania and abroad.

The promotion of the perennial values of the national heritage is a major issue of the present cultural policy as the need of mapping a firm economic and cultural strategy to preserve the authenticity of the folk costume is acute.

The maintaining of the original style of the folk costume in the contemporary age is endangered by the deep transformations (with effect of changing the mentality and the aesthetic taste) produced in the social-economic and cultural life of the villages, on one hand and by mass-media on the other hand, who do not pay attention to the costumes of the folk performers who star in television shows and accept the kitsch and bad taste that create a false image of the folk costume.

As any other artistic event and as a type of inter-human communication, the folklore performance can be considered as an entity or as a system composed of many elements that intersect and condition each other.

There is a certain process at the basis of conceiving and making a folklore performance that the directors of such artistic events often ignore, unfortunately.

It is not our intention to study the evolution of the folklore performance since early times until the present but we should underline that pastoral and agrarian rites, ceremonies and dances involving zoomorphic and anthropomorphic masks related to ancient medieval beliefs and customs have turned in time into peasant entertaining events that met the new requirements of rural communities.

Peasant dances with masks: *turca* (deer-mask) or *brezaia* (bird-mask), *căluşarii* (Pentecost ritual dance), *unchiaşii* (the old men: a ritual dance with masks of old men practiced especially during the funeral wake in Maramureş, Oltenia, Moldavia and mostly in Vrancea) *cucii* (cuckoos masks) etc. that celebrated the harvest and the flocks, the equinoxes and solstices, have been preserved by rural communities and their archaic structure has been influenced by the principles of the folk performances that are recorded in the 19th century: the folk theatre (*irozi, păpuşi, jieni*), the peasant wedding etc.[7]

More than the festive costume, the ritual costume had a marked spectacular character, cumulating more decorations. Ritual costumes appeared as apothropaic clothing disguise within rituals and they have preserved a series of ancient elements, at the same time integrating the most diverse materials and techniques.

Folkloric performances including an important musical part were organized at feudal courts of noblemen or kings, at inns and fairs.

During peasant celebrations in the past, folk performers used to sing the so called "songs for listening" (*doine* and folk ballads) which Mihai Pop considered to be "...monuments with their own artistic and social value...".[8] These traditional musicians would wear similar costumes to those of their audience, actually folk costumes specific for the ethnographic zone where they lived.

Every wedding, round dance and peasant celebration turned into an occasion of displaying folk costumes that people would notice, admire and sometimes the aged would sanction the ones wearing costumes which didn't integrate into the local-zonal style.

In the second half of the 20th century (since the sixth until the ninth decade), traditional celebrations started to be replaced by grandiose folkloric performances and festivals. On such occasion, a special attention was paid to the maintenance and preservation of folk culture elements - dance, instrumental and vocal music, costume - that represented the ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the amplitude of such performances encouraged series industrial production of folk costumes and a lot of details that individualized the peasant clothing in particular areas have been gradually lost.

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[7] Mihai Florea, *Scurtă istorie a teatrului românesc* (*Short History of the Romanian Theatre*), pp. 9-10.

[8] Mihai Pop, *Folclor românesc* (*Romanian Folklore*), vol. I, p. 34.

↗
People from Pădureni wearing festive costumes

A Suite at the Weddings Festival in the Bistriţa district →

During such performances forms of folkloric "professionalism" were instituted. As the reputed folklorist Al.I. Amzulescu said, the professionals were the state-financed folk groups and assemblies who performed beside the amateur folk groups.[9]

Mihai Pop also points out a series of significant aspects of this phenomenon of "replicating" folklore with official support: "Folklore as consumption good is first of all a reproduction of the traditional folklore... the reproduction is made in an artisan manner by the members of folkloric communities and in a professional manner by those who want to sing folkloric songs but are outsiders. Those who have been raised in folkloric environments, the members of the amateur artistic movement, the orchestras, the instrumental and vocal solo performers present – in performances and concerts, on radio and television – folkloric goods that they know from home or that they have taken over from their native environments and want to communicate to the public by means of a modern interpretation. They control more or less the traditional folkloric language but operate with it in an artisan manner, adapting it to the new cultural context to make it effective for the market".[10]

Therefore, the folklore performance has developed in time, transmitting an intentionally artistic message. It has its own aesthetic rules and is closely connected to meanings, forms and languages that are foreign to the stage culture.

Irina Nicolau suggested two variants of folklore performance: one in which the folklore is message, therefore the elements of folk culture should be strengthened in its content; and the second in which folklore is just a wrapping for another message and folkloric elements are communicated marginally.[11]

The appearance of the folk costume "for the show" has been generated by the transfer of folklore performances from their natural environment to the stage.

The Sociological School of Bucharest and its leader Dimitrie Gusti had an important role regarding the promotion of the Romanian folk culture to the stage. University choreographic teams joined the sociological monographic expeditions and they conducted detailed field research upon folk costumes and folk dancing.

The success of a folklore performance is given by the perfect agreement that should exist between repertory, interpretative style and clothing. The criterion of authenticity for a folkloric performance is strictly in relation to the aesthetic criterion that governs the artistic accomplishment of the show as a whole. As part of an entity, the costume has to be subordinated to the aesthetic requirements that structure the performance. If a single element – in this case, the costume – is not at the level of the other components, the authenticity of the folklore performance is diminished.

← Wedding "caller" from Prundu Bârgăului

It is well-known that under stage conditions the artistic, ornamental-decorative function of costumes is strengthened and amplified, contributing to the intensifying of the authenticity of the folkloric performance.

Folk traditional costumes have an extraordinary impact as they confer elegance and distinction to the folklore performers and stand as symbolic elements that evocate spatial and temporal coordinates of an ancient cultural body.

The peasant groups that perform in the spotlights dressed in their authentic festive costumes demonstrate, irrespective of their age, a great dignity and a genuine art of wearing folk garments. As in the village round dance, their costumes reflect the wide diversity of ornamental motives in various combinations and refined chromatic compositions that create a powerfully expressive clothing rhythm. The aesthetic emotion of the spectators is amplified by watching the performers' costumes and perceiving their specific message that communicates fundamental stylistic coordinates.

As a rule, outsiders who have learned about folklore from books or in official cultural institutions wear standardized costumes displaying no particular mark of age, social and occupational status or occasion. Their costumes do not reflect the rich diversity of morphologic, decorative and chromatic variants that can be found on the field. Thus the genuine functions and significances of the costume fade and so does its aesthetic value.

To make series copies of a more or less authentic prototype means creating artificial, hybrid costumes that lack any personal note. It means creating "uniforms" and leads to an impression of monotony.

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[9] Al.I. Amzulescu, *Contribuţii la dezbaterea problemei autenticităţii folclorice* (*Contributions to the Debate on the Authenticity Issue in Folklore*), p. 244.

[10] Mihai Pop, *Folclor românesc* (*Romanian Folklore*), vol. I, p. 244.

[11] Irina Nicolau, *Reflecţii pe marginea spectacolului de folclor* (*Reflections on the Folklore Performance*), p. 71.

Costumes preserve on stage their function of representing, identifying and integration of the wearers into a certain community and ethnic group. As it stands for the local-zonal specificity, a folk costume should observe particularities of style, cut, decoration and chromatics. If we state that a costume represent a certain ethnographic zone of the country then we have to recognize in the costume components of the stylistic features that define that zone, particularize it and make it unique compared to other zones.

Mikel Dufrenne gives a revelatory definition of style: "The style is a certain manner of treating the material, of assembling and matching colours with the aim of manufacturing an object and thus revealing imperiously those arrangements, simplifications or combinations by which man does not cease to add to the nature and to assert his freedom related to all data or models".[12]

We as experts should also say that we cannot apply the same criteria when we appreciate costumes displayed at a folk art exhibitions and costumes worn by stage performers, as these two situations do not coincide, requiring different angles of approach that take into account the specific language of each field.

In exhibitions, costumes are research objects composed of unique pieces that are part of the national artistic treasure and have a representative emblematic value.

In the folklore performances we cannot expect to see costume pieces like the ones in the museums but neither can we agree to interventions that alter the genuine costume structure by introducing all kind of hybrid elements and innovations that do not observe the morphologic, decorative and chromatic particularities of the represented ethnographic zone.

Since the old social structure that determined the appearance and century-long duration of folk costumes

People from Maramureş performing at the "Dimitrie Gusti" National Village Museum

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[12] M. Dufrenne, *Fenomenologia experienţei estetice (The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience)*, p. 71.

A folkloric group attending a festival

has disappeared, traditional folk clothing has lost its practical function. As it is not related to daily life any more, it cannot develop naturally.

For this reason the authentic and representative stage in the evolution of folk costume should be preserved with its stylistic expression kept in museum collections, because this type of costume is the result of the creative effort of numerous peasant generations and it marked their life under work, festive and ritual circumstances for a long time, embodying their view on beauty and dignity.

Any present transformation or innovation that changes the morphologic, decorative and chromatic structure of folk costumes is a false act that degrades and vulgarizes this structure. The so-called "modernization" of the folk costume should be avoided at any cost because it leads to hybrid combinations of materials and ornaments, to the association of unviable, rough elements that generate the kitsch as they do not observe the aesthetic and ethic principles that define the costume culture in the traditional rural civilization.

The creators who craft folk costumes for folklore performers (singers, players or dancers) coming from rural or urban environments have no right to modify or to add to the original, authentic folk costume that is representative for our ethnic group and for a cultural context that belongs to the past and had very different rules compared to the present peasant society.

The creators of our days have no longer existential or aesthetic reasons to intervene in the genuine structure of the costume as they are just beneficiaries of an already existent and structures artistic treasure that they should perpetuate and transmit to future generations.

We could say that the folk costumes live today because they circulate and not due to the process of creation as folk performers are just bearers and transmitters of values that are proposed to them by contemporary creators.

Some voices often motivate the impurity of the folk costume and its estranging from traditional models and structures by the need of adapting to stage requirements as the art of show involves adjustment and stressing of certain elements but they leave out the fact that by excessive stylization, folk costumes become similar to those of light opera and variety show and their essence of folk art products is falsified.

By randomly crowding of ornamental fields of some costume pieces with floral baroque motives and shining metallic thread, beads and sequins arranged in violent chromatic combinations, the contemporary creators produce pieces that do not observe the origin zone of the costume and are very far from the traditional aesthetic universe, so harmonic and balanced and characterized by good taste. It is well known the fact that metallic threads, sequins and beads were used to adorn authentic folk costumes only in combination with cotton and wool threads and had as effect the discreet gleam and accent of the composition creating an unostentatious brightness and a special plastic expressiveness of the costumes.

Also to meet stage requirements, some costume pieces which are still in use in our days because they are highly functional – caps, vests, waistcoats, sheepskin coats, belts (*chimire*), overcoats (*sumane*) – started to be made of synthetic industrial materials inadequate to the specific of peasant costumes. Under the pretext of lower cost and ease of wearing, synthetic fur, artificial leather, tergal, and artificial silk have replaced the traditional materials that were precious by their intrinsic properties (resistance, shine, softness, elasticity) and that amplified the aesthetic valences of authentic folk costumes.

The ornamentation of the overcoats made of synthetic impersonal materials is not inspired in all cases, creating negative effects as far as the composition of drawing and the inadequacy of decoration to shape are concerned. It is known that a decorative motive cannot be represented on any texture and less can it have artistic attributes. A certain motive has to be rendered as artistically as possible by observing the material and the technique of ornamentation, as there is the decoration, shape, texture, technique, chromatics and function of a folk costume piece are in close interrelatedness.

As I have already underlined in the previous chapter, frieze or sheepskin coats were usually worn in the winter but they were obligatory in the costume of the bridegrooms in several settlements in the districts Sibiu, Braşov, Maramureş, Satu Mare etc. Such ritual costume pieces increased the bridegrooms' prestige among the community members, represented their newly acquired status.

If the situation imposes certain adaptations in case of stage folk costumes, any changes should occur with observing the defining stylistic coordinates, the elements of permanence and the traditional ethnic-national vein.

On the other hand, it is well-known that there are many types of folk costume in each ethnographic zone and each type has several morphologic and decorative variants crystallized in different historic periods. To dress all the members of a folkloric group representative for a zone in the same type of costumes means reducing the image of the local clothing, limiting its aesthetic variety and leveling its zonal particularities.

The solution of introducing a so-called "national" costume, randomly created, in the areas where the tradition of making and wearing folk costumes is extinct is not acceptable. Field investigations in these areas should be conducted by experts with the aim of finding out, restoring and revitalizing the genuine local costume.

Many times, the stage processing and adaptation asked for by the directors and scenographers of folk performances are accompanied by a hyper-stylized choreography that gets visibly astray from the cultural models of the folk community.

From the typological point of view, folk costumes, dancing and music should belong to the same region, assembling in perfect symbiosis. All these folkloric elements should act as a unit, supporting and intensifying each other.

To be authentic, a clothing assembly should observe the temporal-historic criterion, associating pieces that belong to the same historic period and have matching materials, techniques (sewing, weaving, and patterning) and decorative-chromatic compositions.

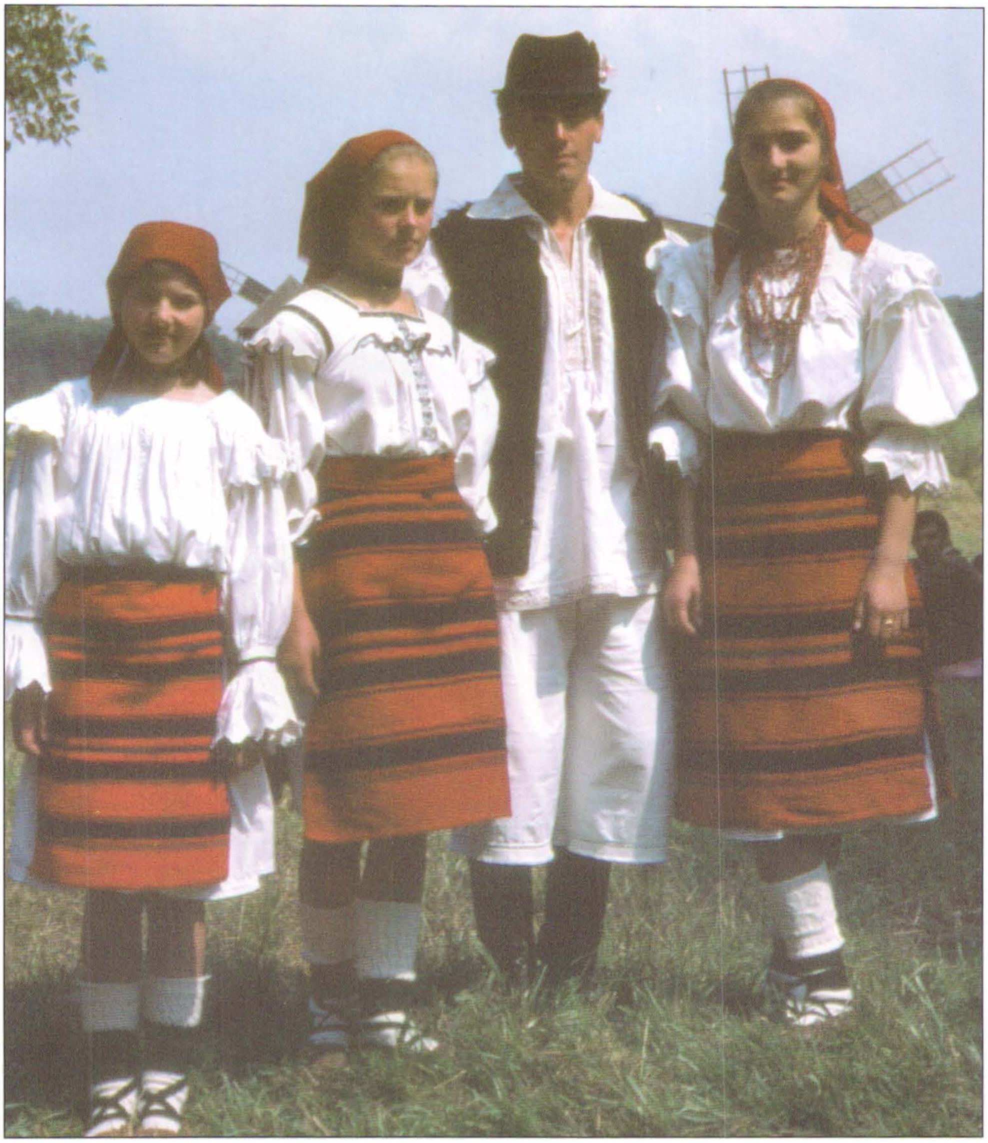
We cannot combine at random costume pieces that don't belong to the same historic period and do not observe the same intrinsic laws settled and strengthened by tradition or pieces that don't match in point of ornamentation and chromatics. For example, we cannot associate a shirt made in our days of industrial fabric and a *catrinţă* or *fotă* taken out of grandmother's dowry chest and neither can we put on an old authentic shirt and a *vâlnic* or *opreg* recently woven of untraditional materials because such associations would break the decorative and chromatic balance of folk clothing.

A lot of folk performers and groups go on tours abroad as messengers of the Romanian folk dancing and music. In our time, when the Romanian folk costume in villages has been maintained at most as festive ceremonial clothing. folk groups have the responsibility of perpetuating those features that characterize us as a people and of keeping intact the thought and feeling of our ancestors for the present generations and those to come.

Promoting the folk costume traditions is part of the cultural policy of any country in the world and the significance of this issue is acutely stressed.

The folk costumes of any ethnic group constitute an integrant part of its core authentic culture and therefore part of the national matrices that compose the unitary and yet diverse European culture. Folk costumes belong to the ethnological heritage and to the national artistic treasure so they should be protected, preserved and promoted. They are documents of true historic and artistic value, encoding the message of past centuries and synthesizing the existential and spiritual dimension of the ethnic group that has created them.

The maintenance of identity emblems in the third millennium constitutes the fundamental scope of the political, economic and cultural strategies of each nation, without which it is difficult to build a multicultural Europe of plural identity that should be based on a multiethnic artistic heritage, which is extremely original and valuable and has to be preserved in its authentic, representative stage.



Tradition bearers from Maramureş

←

Dance from Chioar – page 224

Folk group from Târgu-Lăpuş – page 225

Children wearing costumes from Bucovina (the boy) and Năsăud (the girl) – page 226

*Wedding cooks (**socăciţe**) (above) and the bride's suite (below) – Cupşeni, Maramureş – page 227*

Conclusions

Among the various fields of folk culture and civilization we have chosen to study the traditional festive costume, thus attempting an interdisciplinary approach that was meant to reveal the meaning and main characteristics of the subject and to decode its multiple significances within the rural communities.

To present the folk costume in all its rich and various forms, we have resorted to as many documents and categories of oral, written, graphic and iconographic sources as possible because folk costume is one of the main witnesses of our history and of the characteristic styles of past times.

At the same time, we have used data and information collected during personal field investigations conducted in the settlements inhabited by Romanians in the Moldavia to the east of Prut River and in the Serbian Banat, in order to give scientific arguments for both the unity and diversity of the Romanian folk civilization rooted in the same ethnic basis. Our research has also aimed at revealing the perennial values that the Romanians have created along the centuries, their experience of collective life and of ethnic sense and sensibility.

By the succinct examples used we have meant to demonstrate the unity of Romanian spirituality, as that unity actually ensured the survival and duration of Romanians on wide territorial and cultural areas. To quote Al. Ciura, the founder and editor of the review *Luceafărul*: "There is a Romanian world, though... And if human constructions have set barriers between brothers of the same blood, they are still united by their unity of language and costume and by their love of their people that brings together all those wondering free men of the old and eternal fortress... The same Romanian heart feels joy or sorrow by singing and the same poet people appears in all these songs".[1]

From a historical perspective, the folk costume reflects the changes that occur along different historic ages in the whole social and economic structure, in the people's way of life. The evolution of the folk costume can be looked at as a living expression of the social history of Romanians.

By including each costume piece in a certain archetypal category, our approach has allowed us to look at the costume since origins until the present, following its evolution.

The genesis of a cultural fact as well as its spatial and temporal coordinates are determined – as we have stressed in the previous chapters – by a multitude of factors and a causal context that we have to take into account in order to reach the roots of a phenomenon or its "proto-history". As the art historian and critic Henri Focillon points out: "In isolated environments, folk arts maintain their old stage, their temporal immobility and old historic vocabularies with a constancy that surpasses ethnographic and linguistic borders, all the stable elements being coloured only by the landscapes of historic life".[2]

Folk costumes are indissolubly connected to the way of life, the occupations of the people who wear them and the geographic environment so they are not just the creation of one social category, one epoch, one generation or one ethnographic zone but a *summum* of creation generated by all classes and social categories of a people, by all the generations that have stepped up on the time ladder and by all ethnographic zones. Folk costumes have as common root the Thracian-Getae-Dacian element that has gained particular forms from one area to another depending on a complex of local historic, political and social-economic factors.

The role that a certain social group has had concerning the creation and development of folk costumes and the diversification of the original types into numerous zonal decorative and morphologic variants was more or less important in distinct historical ages or even within the same period. Nevertheless, we can assume – and the ethnographic and folkloric material is remarkably rich and concluding in this respect – that the main social category who created beautiful objects in the village world demonstrating talent, aesthetic sense and chromatic refinement was that category composed of oppressed people, living for long in a servitude state and most of the times constrained to create costume pieces both for themselves and for the richer classes.

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[1] Victor V. Grecu, *Romanitate şi unitate în tradiţia populară* (*Romanity and Unity in Folk Tradition*), p. 59.

[2] Henri Focillon, *Viaţa formelor* (*Life of the Forms*), p. 91.

By studying comparatively the Romanian folk costume and the clothing of other civilizations that generated the folk costumes of ethnic groups in the centre and south-east of Europe, researchers could ascertain that there are some affinities and similitude but also important differences of cut, ornamentation and colour selection between the Romanian folk costume and neighbouring ethnic folk costumes.

There have been a continuous diffusion and a permanent transfer of clothing forms from and to the civilization originated in the space of the Carpathians, Danube and the Black Sea and the civilizations that have developed in the Aegean-Mediterranean, Aegean-Asian, Central European and North-European areas.

Whereas some similarities and cultural identical features are explained by "similar life conditions and an identical stage of development at a certain moment that generates the same techniques"[3] – as Tancred Bănăţeanu suggests in a remarkable theoretical synthesis on folk art – the outstanding differences are due to ethnical idiosyncrasies, as each people builds its own value system, stemming out of a traditional vein, of elements of continuity and stability. Moreover, each people renews its archaic structures by particular forms and means of artistic expression.

The Romanian folk costume has strong personality as it has generated clothing models that have irradiated to the neighbouring areas.

For example, the autochthon provenience of type of shirt pleated around the neck is acknowledged by national and international scientific literature where this type is called *Dacian type, Wallachian type or Carpathian type.*

The decorative formula of the ornamental composition – *altiţă, încreţ, râuri* – appears only on Romanian shirts.

The stylistic particularities of the Romanian folk costume are also manifest in the original interpretation of universally circulating decorative motives. For example, the rhomboidal framing of decorative elements on folk costume pieces has become a characteristic feature of Romanian ornamentics.

Within the Romanian space, the abstract, geometric stylization of natural models has acquired its own particulars that distinguish it from the expressive forms of the peoples in close areas. For example, the difference between the zigzagged, abrupt, soaring and bursting geometrics of the neo-Greek ornamentation and the linear, sober, controlled, simple and unostentatious geometrics in the decoration of the Romanian folk costume appears evident.[4]

As Lucian Blaga remarked in his *Trilogy of Culture*: "Resembling to the ornamentation system of other surrounding people, the Romanian one represents the rare case of a folk art classical by nature as it is proportioned and discreet".[5] "Romanians do not feel the emptiness as a drawback that should be absolutely eliminated (...) filled with something, but as a constitutive and integrating element of their artistic vision. By the positive function of the emptiness (void, field) as rhythmic factor, by this aired condition the Romanian folk art stands in the east as an island of European spirit... spirit of proportion...".[6]

A person has a costume to mark all the important moments of his/her life since birth till death. A type of costume that has generated numerous morphologic-decorative variants in time has its own life and evolution, going through an incipient shaping form in which a style gets contour developing then that style to a climax after which the decline follows and the style gets out of use, being replaced by other clothing forms.

Folk costumes have continuously transformed and adapted not only in long time periods but during the life span of the same generation and they are organically linked to the history of the people, being affected by historic mobility and fluctuations.

By analyzing folk culture in the wake of Romania's integration into the big European family we get to know ourselves better but at the same time we can understand and know "the others" and their culture, we can find the common elements that draw us closer but also the differences that distinguish us as they are part of the ethnic cultural identity.

At the beginning of the third millennium, we are confident that Romanian folk art and especially the festive folk costume will preserve their quality of marking the national, regional, zonal and ethnic identity.

At a time when the representative values of Romanian folk art can be found only in museum collections or are re-interpreted in artisans' workshops, the specialists must assume their duty of promoting nationally and internationally the cultural contribution of the Eastern Romanic space. Quoting G.M. Cantacuzino, a cultural personality of half a century ago, the Romanian cultural heritage "has been a living part in the genesis of our people, a living part of the depths of our collective soul and we can rely on that to understand, assimilate and know what we were yesterday and to be sure of what we want for tomorrow".[7]

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[3] Tancred Bănăţeanu, *Prolegomene la o teorie a esteticii artei populare (Prolegomena to a Theory on the Aesthetics of Folk Art)*, p. 185.

[4] Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii (Trilogy of Culture)*, p. 209.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 212.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 214.

The words that Mircea Eliade wrote in 1953 are still true at a moment when our share in the cultural history of Europe is about to gain a rightful place: "We should not forget for a minute that the cradle of Europe – the real spiritual one and not the geographical one – is in the space of Greece, Rome and the archaic Christianity. All the values that are created within that privileged zone are part of the common heritage of the European culture. We cannot imagine a European culture reduced only to its western forms. Culturally and spiritually, Europe gets its other half by including everything that the Carpathian-Balkan space has created and preserved".[8]

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[7] G.M. Cantacuzino, *Izvoare şi popasuri* (*Springs and Stations*), p. 33.

[8] Mircea Eliade, *Destinul culturii româneşti* (*The Destiny of Romanian Culture*), p. 207.

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